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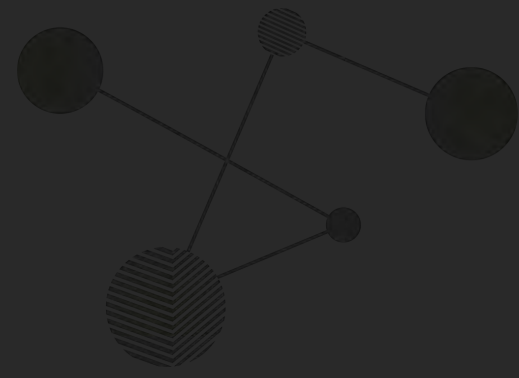
Careers Event Planner & Checklist

YSJ London Careers Team



2024 - 2025

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INTRODUCTION



A MESSAGE FROM THE CAREERS TEAM

A **big welcome** from all of us at the YSJ London Careers and Employability team! Navigating the UK's employment landscape and securing a job, whether part or full-time, may seem challenging: our goal is to empower you with the knowledge, tools and confidence to pursue your ambitions and thrive in a competitive job market.

We provide **weekly classes** on a wide range of careers topics, as well as smaller **workshops** designed to enhance specific skills, such as interview techniques and building your personal brand. We also offer **one-to-one appointments** with our advisers, in which you'll receive tailored advice on exploring career options, CV development, and making informed decisions about your professional path.



THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

YSJ London hosts several **careers events** over the course of the academic year. These are a fantastic opportunity to meet prospective employers, and get an idea of the type of skills and experience that they're looking for in candidates.

It's a chance to expand your professional network in the UK and raise your personal profile, while at the same time gaining insights into a variety of industries and sectors.

This booklet is designed to help you maximise your presence at any careers fair, providing an overview of things you should consider before, during and after attending.



1. PREPARATION



RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

Identify the employers that are attending the event and **carry out research** to learn more about their business (if they're in the private sector), operations, values, and what sort of roles they're hiring for. This will help you to tailor your conversations: by showing genuine interest in the employer and demonstrating knowledge of their operations and activities, you'll both engage and impress them.



WHAT SHOULD I BE LOOKING AT?

A good place to begin your research is the **organisation's own website**. You'll usually find information about the services they offer, the main types or categories of clients/customers they have, their mission statement, and, in the case of smaller organisations, their employees. What technology is the organisation using, and how are they using it?

Check **news threads** for up-to-date information on the organisation's activities, and their LinkedIn page. You might also want to look up the organisation on Glassdoor.com to get some insights into what it's like to actually work for them.

Think about the bigger picture: What are the current challenges and opportunities in the sector and industry? What makes the organisation stand out from its competitors (if it's private sector)? How is technology being employed by the sector/industry generally?

ChatGPT and other AI tools can be a useful springboard for further research. For example, you could ask for more information about the organisation (if it's large) or get some insights into the industry as a whole. Just remember that the information generated by AI isn't necessarily correct and is normally quite general - it's always worth digging deeper.

Having some understanding of the **wider economic, commercial and even social landscape** in which the organisation operates will give you something to talk about in networking situations, and again highlight your interest in working in the industry - and for them!



UPDATE YOUR CV

If you have a UK-ready CV, make sure that the information is up-to-date, accurate and aligned with the type of role you're interested in applying for.

If you're interested in more than one field, **consider preparing two CVs**, each tailored to a different industry and/or type of role. For example, one CV might be oriented to marketing, highlighting your relevant experience and skills in that area, whereas a second CV could focus on your background and strengths in sales.

Bring along several hard copies to hand out to recruiters. If you don't have a CV, start planning ahead - you'll need one when contacting employers after the event.

We've included a chronological CV template in this pack to get you started.



GET YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE READY

If you don't have a **LinkedIn profile**, it's worth setting one up. LinkedIn is a great way to connect with prospective employers and network with other professionals. It's also a channel for raising your professional profile and showcasing your talents.

LinkedIn tips:

Choose a professional profile picture: The background should be neutral and you should be wearing clothes that are appropriate for your industry. Smile and look approachable!

Write a compelling headline: use relevant industry keywords to make your profile more discoverable. For example: "Digital Marketing Specialist | Content Strategist | SEO Expert".

Craft an engaging summary: Use the first person ("I"/"me") to tell your story, highlighting your accomplishments and finishing off with a call to action (e.g. inviting people to connect).

Align your CV and LinkedIn: Make sure the information on your CV and LinkedIn profile don't contain inconsistencies. Check dates, names and job titles.

Encourage endorsements: Ask former colleagues, supervisors or clients for recommendations. A strong recommendation can add credibility to your profile.

Include any licenses or recommendations you have: Include dates of completion and issuing authority.



STRATEGISE

Your time is valuable: **Consider who you want to talk to, and why.** Planning which employers you want to engage with most, and in what order, will give you a clear set of objectives to work towards at the event. **Prioritise** prospective employers according to their relevance in relation to your career aims, your interests and your experience. An example list, including question areas, might look something like this:

ORGANISATION	ROLE	QUESTIONS	RELEVANCE
NHS	Graduate Management Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does scheme involve? • Do they accept people with my academic background? • Alternative positions? • How long is application process? 	High
Arsenal FC	Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of work? • What skills do I need? • Days of week? 	Unknown at this time



PREPARE AND PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Treat every interaction with employers as an 'informational' interview: Although you're not being formally assessed for a job, how you interact with them could positively or negatively affect your future chances of working for them!

Consider what **information** you'd like to get from employers and prepare a list of intelligent and informed questions. You could start with a short self-introduction (less than a minute):

"Hi, my name is xxxx and I'm currently studying for an MBA at York St John's London. My background is in engineering, and I have several years experience of working for one of Sri Lanka's largest architectural consultancies on major infrastructure projects. I'm looking for work experience/to build a career as a project manager in the UK."

Before moving on to questions about the organisation. It's always worth expressing an interest in the representative's own career:

"How did you start in this line of work?" or "What's a typical day in your role like?"



2. ON THE DAY



PUNCTUALITY

Give yourself plenty of time to talk to focus on the employers you've prioritised, and to explore different organisations' stands. How much time you need depends on the size of the event, of course, but try to turn up earlier rather than later. There will generally be fewer people, shorter queues and more opportunity to network with representatives from the attending organisations.



APPEARANCE

Your personal appearance matters. **Dress professionally** - i.e. in smart clothes - even though the representatives may not be. Again, it shows that you're taking the event seriously and your professionalism.

Avoid prominent logos, text or images on your clothes, 'noisy' patterns and 'loud' colours. Un-ironed shirts, tattered trainers and stains are also a no-no.

Personal hygiene is also worth considering. It may seem obvious, but make sure you've showered, brushed your teeth and are wearing clean clothes.



THE RIGHT MINDSET

It's important to approach every career or networking event with a **positive frame of mind**. Remember that you have nothing to lose by attending, except a little of your time. **Don't be intimidated or feel a sense of 'imposter syndrome'**: you have the experience, education and talents that employers prize. They're at the event to meet, and potentially recruit, people like you!



BEHAVIOUR

It's extremely important to **convey a sense of professionalism** at all times, whether you're interested in working for a particular employer or not. The best way to approach a careers event is to treat every interaction with representatives of an organisation as an informal interview.

What does this mean in practice?

Careers events are usually very busy, so you may have to wait to speak to the employer(s) you're interested in. Be patient. Avoid interrupting anyone, or being pushy or aggressive.

There are also areas which you should generally avoid talking about in initial conversations, such as money and visas. Above all, **never mention anything that could be construed as unethical**. If you're an international student, for example, don't suggest that you're willing to work longer than the maximum number of hours prescribed by law. This is illegal and will immediately be a red flag for any prospective employer.

Be attentive, polite and engaged, even if you decide that the roles described by the employer aren't for you. Always treat the employer and other students with respect and dignity.



KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Factor time into your schedule to look around the event. Even though you may assume an organisation doesn't fit your career objectives, they could nonetheless offer employment opportunities that you hadn't considered, or didn't know existed.

The NHS is a good example of this: alongside doctors, nurses, medical technicians, receptionists and administrators, it also employs project managers, IT specialists, accountants and many other roles. **Larger organisations** naturally tend to have a wider range of positions, but even small companies could have vacancies that suit your profile.



FINISH ON A HIGH NOTE

Always **conclude an interaction** with a prospective employer by leaving them with a positive and memorable impression of you:

“Thanks very much for taking the time to talk to me. It was really interesting/insightful”

“I feel like I’ve learned a lot - thank you very much”

If you feel that the conversation went well, and that you’d like to remain in contact or get additional information about the company, conclude with a **call to action**:

“Would it be possible to keep in touch (via LinkedIn, for example)”?

“Do you have the details of anyone at the company/in the department that I could get in touch with (for further information)?”

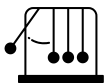
“I’m really keen on learning more about the type of roles that would match my profile; do you know who I should contact?”

Don’t let the conversation tail off - end it **confidently and memorably**, regardless of how useful and/or relevant you think the information you’ve been given is.

See any conversation as a chance to **expand your professional network** - you never know where the person you’re talking to will be working in the future, or in what position!



3. FOLLOWING UP



DON'T LOSE MOMENTUM

If you're given a contact name and details, use them!

Follow up your interaction within 48 hours of the event - it will show the employer that you're highly motivated! The meeting will also still be fresh in the memory of the individual you spoke to.



USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO HELP YOU

ChatGPT or other generative AI tools can be used to come up with suitable message templates. However, don't rely too heavily on AI: it can sound impersonal and generic if used unthinkingly. Add some personal touches (e.g. mention specific elements of the conversation you had, as well some details of your interests/strengths/background etc.).

The following is an example of a LinkedIn follow-up message that you can use as the basis for your own initial post-event communication:

Hi [contact name],

It was great meeting you at the [event name] last [day of the week]/yesterday/today. I really enjoyed our conversation about [specific topic] and would love to stay connected.

Looking forward to staying in touch!

Best wishes,

[Your name]



AI - EMAILS

Generally speaking, a follow-up email should be longer than a LinkedIn message, and contain more information about your background, relevant experience and motivation.

The following is an example of the type of message you could send to a potential employer after a careers event:

Subject: YSJ Career Event

Dear (recipient's name),

My name is [your name], and I'm currently studying my Master's degree in [subject] at York St. John University's London campus. I had the pleasure of meeting your colleague [name of person you met at the event] at the Career Ready event held at my campus on [date]. They gave me your details and suggested that I contact you for further information about [company, specific role etc.].

I'm writing to express my strong interest in [specific role/department/area of interest/graduate scheme etc.] at [organisation name]. During the fair I was particularly impressed by [specific aspect of the company or conversation], and I am eager to learn more about how I could contribute to your team.

I would be grateful for any opportunity to discuss potential career opportunities and to gain further insights into [company/organisation name]. If possible, I would love to arrange a brief meeting or phone call at a time and date convenient for you.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to the possibility to connect with you.

Best regards,

[Your full name]

[Phone number]

[LinkedIn]



CHECKLIST

before you go, have you....

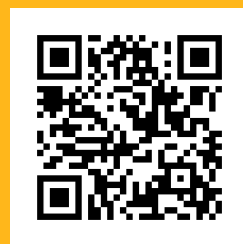
- ☐ **Prepared/aligned** your CV and LinkedIn profile
- ☐ **Researched** the organisations and sector(s)
- ☐ **Prioritised** the employers you want to talk to
- ☐ **Drawn up** a list of questions you'd like to ask
- ☐ **Considered** what you're going to wear



The **YSJ London Careers team** provides a range of services designed to support you in achieving your employment aims and aspirations, including:

- **Weekly lectures on careers-related topics**
- **CV drop-in sessions**
- **One-to-one careers appointments**
- **Skills workshops**
- **Guest speakers from industry**
- **Careers events for full and part-time roles**

Contact us on Handshake:



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