**Graduate Schemes**

**A few facts:**

* Graduate schemes are fiercely competitive because there are a limited number of places available
* You will have to apply to between ten and twenty to stand a good chance of getting a place
* Most require a 2:1 or above, but it’s best to check and do let employers know if there are exceptional circumstances for a lower grade
* It’s best to apply at the start of your final year, to secure a job for the following Autumn
* You may have to be prepared to relocate

**Tips**

* It’s important to do your research, know which area you’re interested (e.g. HR) and to research different companies and the package (salary, training opportunities, etc.) they offer.
* Sign up to Milkround (graduate scheme website)
* Sign up to mailing lists to be informed when applications for your chosen scheme open
* Know when your chosen schemes will open and research the company before completing your application.

NB: (The times top 100 graduate recruiters is a good place to start – remember many large companies, whether banks, insurance or accountancy firms, will have a marketing/HR/communications department).

Blind in Business are able to proofread application forms

**Graduate Schemes: Application Process**

**Below is an outline of the standard application process for graduate schemes in the UK. Some graduate schemes follow a slightly different format and it is worth researching the exact structure, which will be available on the firm’s graduate careers website.**

1. **Application form**

* Personal details / work experience / qualifications
* Questions: why our grad scheme/our company or what do you see as the key challenges in X industry in the next 10 years?
* Thoroughly check spelling and grammar, do research and try to write in an interesting/compelling style

1. **Online tests**

* Numerical, verbal and abstract reasoning
* Most companies have practice tests available online
* You can buy test books or use free online resources to practise
* Abstract reasoning is not suitable for visually impaired people
* It is worth requesting extra time for the numerical and verbal reasoning tests

NB: See our handout on numerical reasoning tips

1. **Phone/skype interview**

* Prepare as though this is a formal interview
* Take your time and try to give clear concise answers

NB: See our handout on competency-based interviews

1. **Assessment centre**
2. **Group exercise (given a group task e.g. design a loyalty scheme to attract new and retain existing customers and present to managers)**

* **Assessed on what you say and HOW YOU INTERACT with other candidates**
* **TIPS: be in charge of time keeping / try to involve others / don’t cut people off or criticise their suggestions / try to structure the group approach to the task (e.g. ‘let’s split into pairs and take one bullet point each to save time’ / ‘does anyone prefer option A, or are we all agreed to pursue option B?’)**

1. **Competency-based HR interview**
2. **Presentation (can be pre-prepared or given time limit on the day to prepare for a short presentation)**

* **Prepare thoroughly if you are given the topic in advance**
* **Focus on structure (introduction / key points / conclusion)**
* **Expect Q&A (prepare for potential questions/save few facts)**
* **Be clear and concise**
* **Stick to time – it’s better to be under-time than waffling and only making half of your points**

1. **Other (role play / in-tray exercise)**

* **Role play involves acting out a specific scenario (meeting with your team leader – asking you why you didn’t do something – seeing what you suggest to put it right)**
* **In-tray exercise – given documents to read and extract key information to respond to a series of emails from colleagues (Civil Service)**