**10 things I wish I’d known before applying for graduate schemes**

1. **Timing**

Graduate schemes usually open in early September for a job beginning in the autumn of the following year. If possible, you should apply for roles during your final year at University. Some graduate schemes are only open to candidates who have completed a summer internship with the company and others are only eligible to those still at university. For many schemes, you have to apply early in the cycle because places are filled on a rolling basis. If you need adaptations to tests because of a disability, remember to chase up the relevant HR person to make sure that places on your preferred scheme don’t disappear before the company can consider you.

1. **Prioritising**

Many schemes open at the same time. It is worth deciding which ones to prioritise and writing thorough and well-researched applications, one at a time. Keep a list of who you have applied to, for what role and when you can expect to hear from them. This list will be useful later on.

1. **Terminology**

Some employers have different terminology for graduate schemes. Make sure that you use the correct terms (e.g. ‘future leaders programme’ or ‘fast stream’). You don’t want it to look like you have cut and pasted your application.

1. **Patience**

You have to be prepared to wait. Many schemes will not contact you for many months after the application deadline has passed.

1. **Vigilance**

It is important to watch your inbox, because when employers do get in touch, they usually have a strict time limit for completing tasks. Interview slots also fill up quickly, if you are sent a link to an automated appointment system. If you’re planning a holiday, make sure you will have email access.

1. **Professionalism**

Some employers use Skype interviews, so make sure your username is professional. This goes without saying for your email address.

1. **Realism**

Graduate schemes are fiercely competitive and it is a HUGE achievement to make it to an assessment centre. Be prepared for some rejections and take it as a learning process.

1. **Relocating**

You have to be prepared to relocate for a graduate scheme. Some employers will be more flexible if you have a disability, but there are no guarantees. You can usually find out online where graduates for each company are likely to be based.

1. **Disclosure**

Most graduate employers expect a certain number of applications from candidates with a disability and are prepared to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process. Whether you prefer to disclose or not is a personal decision, but it’s good to know that employers are often supportive.

1. **Social Media**

If you want to keep up-to-date with your preferred graduate employers, you can ‘like’ their Graduate/Careers Facebook Page. This way, information on their graduate scheme and other employment opportunities will appear in your Facebook news feed.