



Advice for Sports Students – Years 3 & 4

1. Don't bury your head in the sand!

Time flies, and you are already half way (even three-quarters) through your degree! Have you given any thought to what you'll do when you graduate yet? It may seem a bit daunting, but **ignoring your future and hoping that it will just "go away" isn't an option.**

2. It's normal to be uncertain about what you want to do...

Sometimes it might seem like everybody else has got their future sorted – except you. That's actually *not* the case. In our experience a good many students in years 3 and 4 are unclear about their career direction. (Perhaps the ones who do know are so pleased they shout about it?!) So not being certain about your own plans is OK...

3. ...but do something about it!

Being unsure may be normal, but not acting on it could be a problem. You need to spend some time thinking about *you* (e.g. what you want from, enjoy, are good at?) and your *options* (i.e. what is out there?). Do you want to work in sport, or do something totally different? Do you wish/need to do more study? Consider:

- Using our online Career Planning Programme
- Having a go on Prospects Planer to generate career ideas
- Looking at what other graduates in past years have gone on to do.
- Speaking to a Careers Adviser

Jobs & Careers for Sports Students is a website especially for you! **Use the links on it to begin your research:** www.education.ed.ac.uk/careers/sports.html

4. How was it for you?

One thing that will get employers excited about you (and help you to decide on your future) is **work experience**. This can be paid or unpaid (recruiters don't care, even if your bank manager does), in the UK or overseas, but it is important you have some experience on your CV and you can talk about it at interview. If you are studying *Sport & Recreation Management*, make the most of your **placement!** Can you use it to get additional experience, make contacts, learn about different jobs? If you are studying *Applied Sports Science* you have the option of a **project-based attachment** which could also be of great benefit to you and is well worth considering.

5. Make a record

But don't just 'do' a placement/volunteer/undertake work experience! **Document what you do** so that you have a record – you'll be amazed how quickly you forget times/dates, tasks, activities, people and achievements. Think about what **skills and knowledge you have developed**. If you have a particular career in mind, think about your skills in relation to it – are there **any skills gaps you need to fill?** See www.careers.ed.ac.uk/CPP/What_I_Want/Offer.htm for help with this.

6. Brush up on job application skills

You may have all the experience, skills and knowledge required of an Active Schools Co-ordinator, a chartered accountant, or needed to apply to physiotherapy MSc... but do you know how to produce an effective **CV**, complete a strong **application form** and perform well at **interview** or **assessment centre**?

- The Careers Service runs workshops on these and other key skills. They are free, so come along! Details at: www.careers.ed.ac.uk/STUDENTS/Applications_Interviews/index.html.
- We also invite employers in to run workshops on skills such as: business awareness and presentation skills – visit: www.careers.ed.ac.uk/STUDENTS/Events/index.html.

7. Talk to employers

Whether penultimate or final year, it's a good idea to talk to employers to find out (more) about their organisation, the opportunities available and what they look for. In a sporting context you will probably need to seek out such organisations yourself – the Careers Service can give you some starting points.

Some large recruiters in other areas (especially business, finance and law) will visit the city (or even campus) to see you. The Careers Services organises **Careers Fairs** and a programme of **Employer Presentations** each semester – visit our website to see who and when: www.careers.ed.ac.uk/STUDENTS/Events/index.html.

8. More study?

If all this talk of jobs and employers isn't for you, perhaps you're considering further study? It may be that you have enjoyed your course so much, you **want to study** it at a higher level. Alternatively, you **may need to study**, either for a vocational qualification/conversion course (e.g. teacher, radiographer, social worker) or to gain more knowledge/an edge to succeed in a particular career (e.g. nutrition, sports coaching). If so you'll need to start **researching courses** and institutions as early as possible – and of course **investigate funding**. Help is available at the Careers Service. It may be worth **talking to your own tutors/lecturers** too; if you are considering a sport-related course they may have useful advice/ knowledge and whichever course you choose, will have to write you a reference.

9. Check deadlines

Some postgraduate courses have very early closing dates (e.g. *graduate medical degree* – 15th Oct, *teacher training* – 1st Dec), as do many graduate recruitment schemes/sectors (e.g. *Civil Service* – 30 Nov; *investment banking* – Nov/Dec). So make sure you research deadlines as early as possible in order not to miss any!

10. Gap year

Some of you may decide that you wish to take time out and do a gap year. Fine – it can be great fun and, if properly planned, can benefit your future career. There are lots of resources at the Careers Service to help you, whether you wish to volunteer abroad, travel or do something different. But **don't leave it to chance!** A year spent at home in a dead-end job won't impress!

Help! If it all seems too much, call in or telephone us (650 4670) to **book an appointment with a Careers Adviser** (45 mins). We're happy to help!

