

Starting your career in **Canada** Country Guide for International Students



You chose to study in the United Kingdom. You are beginning to think about what your options are after graduation. Building on an excellent international education you are returning to your home country, Canada. You stand at the beginning of an exciting career, but what are the steps you need to take in order to find a suitable job, and where do you find the information you need?

This careers profile provides you with practical advice about returning to work in Canada to help you make a successful start in your career in the Canada labour market. Included are key facts about current trends and jobs in Canadian industry, advice about seeking employment in Canada hints and tips for making a successful application, and helpful information sources.

CONTENTS

Country profile

Benefits

Main routes to employment

Where will your career take you?

Current career prospects

Where to find more information

Appendix 1: sample résumé

Country profile

Canada is one of the world's wealthiest nations and has the one of the top ten largest economies in the world. It has a regionalised economy; major sectors (such as agriculture, minerals, natural gas, oil, hydro-electricity, forest products, motor vehicles, multimedia, food industry and biotechnology) differ in importance from region to region. Canada's service sector has recently increased quite rapidly, currently employing almost three quarters of the Canadian workforce.

One of its sub-sectors, the retail trade, contributes enormously to the GDP and is one of the largest employers in Canada, employing almost 12% of the population. In the final months of 2008, the Canadian economy was hit by a sharp recession due to the global economic crisis. In 2009, Canada's capital Ottawa showed its first fiscal deficit after twelve years of positive balances. However, Canada's most important banks turned out to be amongst the strongest in the world when the world economy in 2009 started to come out of the global crisis partly because of their conservative system and strong capitalization.

KEY FACTS: The Canadian economy

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| GDP real growth 2009: | -2.5% (est.) |
| GDP per capita: | US\$40,400 (2009 est.) |
| Labour force: | 18.39 million |
| Unemployment rate 2009: | 8.3% (est.) |
| Major sectors of occupation: | Services (76%); Manufacturing (13%); Construction (6%) |
| Main trading partners: | USA, UK, China, Mexico and Japan |

Canada will not escape the global credit crunch, but its long-term economic fundamentals remain strong. However with less international demand, the domestic labour market is set to weaken, leading to an increase in unemployment. The commodity-driven boom in the western provinces has decreased as a result of falling commodity prices, but these are likely to strengthen again in 2011.

KEY FACTS: The Canadian graduate labour market

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Average age at graduation: | 26 years |
| Average graduate starting salary: | Approx. US\$37,000 |
| Average working week: | Monday to Friday, 40-45 hours |
| Holiday entitlement: | 14 consecutive days annual leave for any full-time job after you have worked for one year. The exception is Saskatchewan, where employees are entitled to at least three weeks of annual leave. |

Benefits

Benefits of a UK qualification

Possibly the largest benefit which all international students receive when studying at one of the over 100 universities in the UK, is the fact that UK universities have some of the most renowned and prestigious histories of higher education in the world. Even if a graduate does not study at one of the more famous institutions, the graduate can return to their home country safe in the knowledge that no matter where they look for work, their qualifications will be highly respected. This is also useful in job interview situations, in which your study in the UK can come into conversation as a point of interest and as an example of experience in situations of teamwork, cultural awareness, and even when you were outside of your comfort zone.

Graduating: Searching for work

Not long ago, student life and job finding was a far simpler procedure. Graduates would simply leave university, either looking for work through friends and family, a large company or a local business, and often step into a full-time job after an interview. These days, a wider variety of options exist which match the wider variety of jobs and the ease of travel which is available to the worldly student. As the number of students increases, so does the quality of the competition.

It's tough out there. Many graduates having just left university know this, whilst others are soon to find out. Since so many new university leavers have a career path in mind, which they may have had for many years, the competition is fierce in many of the desirable graduate schemes. This is more the case in the UK than almost anywhere else. However, one benefit which you as the international student have is that you have a home country to which you can return. The lack of vacancies in the UK has led to many British students leaving for work further afield.

It can be difficult to come across vacancies in graduate jobs, full-time occupation is hard to find without experience and most find that internships can involve heavy competition. Most students find that the main issue is simply knowing where to look, and this guide hopes to point you in the right direction.

Check out the 'More Information' section to see handy links with tips and advice in the search for work.

Main routes to employment

Getting started

As a graduate looking for work in Canada, you should use a variety of strategies. The main source for vacancies, information and tips concerning job applications in Canada is the Internet. When searching the Internet for job offers and vacancies, it is advisable to bookmark webpage's and re-visit them regularly. Make use of email alert services offered by online resources to stay updated with the newest jobs.

Online recruitment and vacancy websites:

- Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers: www.cacee.com/
- Canadian Employment Network: www.canjobs.com/
- Canada's top 100 employees: www.canadastop100.com/
- Canada Training and Careers: www.jobsetc.gc.ca/eng/
- CareerClick: www.careerclick.com
- Job Searching Canada: www.jobsearchcanada.com/
- Megajobs: www.canadianjobs.com/
- Monster: www.monster.ca
- Search engine for jobs in Canada: www.eluta.ca/
- Workopolis.com: www.workopolis.com/EN/Common/HomePage.aspx
- WorkSite Canada: www.worksitecanada.com/
- Youth Resource Network: www.youth.gc.ca/eng/home.shtml

Social networking

Social networking has become an increasingly common and important part of seeking work, especially with the social media generation. Sites such as Facebook.com and LinkedIn.com have flourished into everyday use for graduates and employers alike, in order to find the right person for the job. Graduates looking for work in their home nation may already be aware of the value of such sites, and of specific sites which are specialised in their own country.

Graduates can place details of themselves including their job experience, education level, home/current university as well as a photo if preferred. On some of these sites they can also search for jobs according to their specific interest or area of study. What is clear is that graduates should certainly take the time to discover the potential job opportunities which these sites offer, both socially and at a socio-professional level.

Main routes to employment

The following list of examples is not exhaustive, and contains websites with varying emphasis on professionalism and social networking.

Sites worth checking out (global):

- www.ecademy.com
- www.efactor.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.linkedin.com
- www.myspace.com
- www.plaxo.com
- www.ryze.com
- www.spoke.com
- www.ziggs.com

Newspapers are a helpful starting point when it comes to the job-hunt. to stay updated with the newest jobs.

Key newspapers to look for:

- Calgary Sun, www.calgarysun.com/
- Globe and Mail, www.theglobeandmail.com
- Montreal Gazette, www.montrealgazette.com/
- National Post, www.nationalpost.com/
- Ottawa Sun, <http://www.ottawasun.com/>
- The Toronto Star, www.thestar.com/
- Vancouver Sun, www.vancouversun.com/
- Winnipeg Sun, www.winnipegsun.com/

Although a wide variety of jobs are advertised in regional newspapers, not all vacancies are advertised in the press. Therefore, the use of alternative sources, persistency and well developed detection skills will help you to discover the hidden jobs.

Main routes to employment

Graduate jobs/Careers Fairs

An interesting way of finding work or further education is through graduate fairs. With varying focuses in each event, graduates can find themselves coming face to face with companies of interest and may even find interest in something which was not previously considered.

Graduate fairs are also a good opportunity to find out about graduate schemes being offered by companies and what these entail.

Many offer other facilities such as CV workshops, letter writing tuition and a chance to network with individuals representing companies of differing sizes and reputations, thus they can offer a good learning opportunity even if you struggle to find a company suited to you.

Many universities in the UK hold their own fairs near the end of the spring/summer term and throughout the summer, so it is well worth getting involved early. There may also be fairs in your home country, whether a national event or a university which is local to you, so keep your eyes and ears open.

Job fairs are usually arranged by companies, often in one industry, to recruit new employees for actual openings. These fairs are generally advertised in newspapers, trade magazines and sometimes on the Internet.

You may find the following websites useful for locating fairs:

- www.canadacareerweek.com/ - Career fairs are usually held at educational institutions to introduce students to a variety of organisations and career opportunities. They are advertised in campus newsletters and sometimes in general newspapers.
- www.careerdoor.com/jobseekers Technology Career Fairs, Career Door Inc
- www.destination-canada-forum-emploi.ca/accueil.php?lang=en – 'Destination Canada' job fair
- www.educationcareerfairs.com Education and Career Fairs in British Columbia
- www.thenationaljobfair.com/visitors/ - Job fair in Canada.
- <http://recruitincanada.com/> - Some university fairs in Canada.

In each major city there are countless job fairs organised each month. Graduates are advised to check community sites and look for advertisements in local papers and magazines.

Alternative sources of information on jobs and companies:

- Canada Student Employment Guide, Student Employment Network: www.studentjobs.com/

Main routes to employment

When looking for a job, it is important to extend your network of contacts. Let not only your relatives but also friends, former professors and teachers, neighbours and other acquaintances know that you are searching for a job and tell them what kind of job or position you are looking for.

Try to attend career fairs, and join professional networks to help you get in touch with valuable contacts. It is advisable to register with any employment agency up to one year before the date of your return to Canada. Applications for a specific role, however, should be sent no sooner than one month before your scheduled arrival back in Canada.

The right skills and competencies

In Canada, the entire application procedure is rather commercial; therefore both your application letter and résumé should contain words that express accomplishment and action. The English speaking part of the country is slightly more direct in this sales style of approach than the French regions however, where a more formal and less direct approach is favoured.

Most wanted:

- Effective communication skills.
- Problem solving & creative capabilities.
- Computer skills.
- Adaptability and responsibility.
- Honesty, self-esteem, integrity and personal ethics.
- Team working skills.

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Main routes to employment

The application letter

Use a short and professional style in the application letter and address your cover letter to a specific person. Taking the time to find out the name of the manager of the department to which you are applying will signal to the employer that you are resourceful and more interested in the position compared with other candidates who have not taken the time to find this information.

The application letter is usually four paragraphs long. In the first paragraph you should mention the job advertisement. The second paragraph should be an introduction to your résumé including details of your education and work experience. In the third paragraph you should demonstrate your knowledge of the company or the industry. This is crucial if you want to differentiate yourself from the crowd and will show the employer that you are knowledgeable and informed.

Company websites are very helpful when looking for this kind of information. You should conclude your letter in the fourth paragraph; mentioning also your telephone number. Your address should be given at the top of the letter and also include your name and address in the left-hand corner of the envelope.

Résumé

The term résumé is used instead of CV in Canada. Résumés are short, usually a maximum of two pages. Keep in mind that employers usually have to review many résumés, so it is best to keep yours brief and to the point. Always ask yourself 'does the employer need to know this about me?' and 'can the employer see my strengths easily?' in order to determine whether or not to include something in your résumé. Write your profile in short, powerful sentences packed with power words paying attention to your skills (not only computer skills but also other skills such as time management, organisational skills or communication skills), your specific knowledge and your experiences.

Remember a résumé is a personal advertisement, so try to sell yourself by presenting your qualifications, experiences and achievements in a manner that is sharp, focused and intelligent.

Main routes to employment

Digital applications

Digital application forms have become more common. The Internet is considered a fast medium of communication but completing an application form online requires the utmost attention –always check your submission before pressing send. If you are making your application via email, write a concise application email with your résumé attached. Applicants should always remember to use formal language when submitting an online application or applying via email.

The job interview

Although it is not necessary to send copies of your diplomas with your application letter, it is highly recommended to bring copies of your diplomas and certificates with you to the interview.

Preparing for the interview:

- Think in advance about questions that might be asked.
- Find out more about the objectives of the position and the skills required.
- Research the organisation's background.
- Be articulate about your skills, abilities, personal qualities and experience.
- Prepare your own questions to ask the employer.
- Make sure you arrive on time for the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the location it might be worthwhile checking it out in advance.

In Canada, the latest trend for job interviews is Behavioural Based Interviewing (BBI). The basic premise behind BBI is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.

During BBI the candidate will be asked to give examples of when he or she has used a particular skill in order to tackle a particular problem. The interviewer will describe a situation and follow the candidate's thought process while he or she is describing how they would solve the problem or deal with the situation.

Where will your career take you?

Research from the i-graduate International Student Barometer study tells us the following about the main career drivers for Canadian graduates:

Major career drivers for Canadian graduates:

1. I want to develop myself
2. I want to make a difference to the world
3. I like to be recognised for my achievements
3. Future job security is important to me

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The economic crisis currently gripping the globe has consequences for the Canadian graduate labour market. Job opportunities at Canadian universities are declining, but student enrolment levels have not changed.

However, the Canadian economy is expected to recover quickly and when this happens, industry and the public sector will be in need of the expertise of this year's graduates.

Top 3 future plans of Canadian students about to graduate at UK HE Institutions:

1. Employment in Canada
2. Still undecided
3. Short term employment in the UK

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Current career prospects

Sectors such as banking, real estate and communication industries, education, health, logistics, consultancy, e-commerce, ICT industries as well as tourism play a key role with regard to Canada's gross domestic product.

In Canada, the major growth sectors from both an employment as well as a GDP perspective are public administration, the service sector, educational services, health care and social assistance, arts, entertainment and recreation.

Where are the opportunities?

Accounting and finance

Hiring in this sector has slowed down notably in 2009 compared to previous years. However, the government has prepared a plan to stimulate the economy and invest in the foundation of long-term sustainability of the sector. In the long run, there will again be a need for well-trained and experienced staff working in corporate finance, commercial and investment banking, insurance, real estate and credit management, financial consulting, business administration and accounting. Nevertheless for the moment it is difficult to find a job in this sector.

Aerospace

Aerospace totaled US\$12.25 billion in Canadian expenses. Bombardier, the only Canadian aircraft manufacturer, recently let go 1300 workers due to the financial crisis. However, the company did start recruiting again due to the positive development of their latest aircraft projects. Work opportunities in the aerospace industry lie in airframe structure assembly, power conversion and distribution system, integrated electronic controls, environmental conditioning systems and air traffic and management systems.

Agriculture, fisheries and forestry

Agriculture in Canada plays an important role in the country's economy. Fisheries and forestry play a smaller role. Major products from this industry are wheat, cotton, livestock and food products. The Canadian agriculture sector is further developing into the biomass and food process manufacturing sectors.

Current career prospects

Automotive

The Canadian automotive industry has grown since tariff-free automotive trade between Canada and America was agreed in 1965, with 90% of its production now shipped to the US. However, the recent restructuring of American car manufacturers like Chrysler and GM has had a negative impact upon the Canadian labour market.

Biotechnology

Over the last 20 years, biotechnology has been growing continually faster and is now worth 6.4% of Canada's GDP. Canada is aiming at growing a bio-based economy industry, focusing on biological tools and products for example, eco-friendly products and tools for medical treatments, diagnostics, chemical products and energy.

Construction

The Canadian construction sector is slowing down and will hold out for any further investment. The industry seems to want to 'wait and see' regarding the economy conditions. However, the Canadian department of finance is trying to invigorate housing construction by providing billions of Canadian dollars for stimulating more modern and green infrastructure constructions.

Chemical manufacturing

Ontario, Quebec and Alberta are the main areas of advancement within manufacturing industries. Job opportunities particularly lie in synthetic resin, petrochemical and organic chemical manufacturing.

ICT and e-commerce

ICT and e-commerce are arguably the biggest sectors in Canada with US\$112.1 billion of the GDP. Further growth is expected in the market of IT services, wholesale telecom, business telecom, consumer telecom, hardware and software.

Current career prospects

Mining

Canadian crude oil reserves are surpassed only by Saudi Arabia in terms of quantity. Moreover, with 2300 drilling wells across the country, Canada is the country with the second most drilling sites in the world. Research and development studies ensure the industry grows even faster. Topics of extensive research include crude oil recovery, refining, pipeline optimization, petrochemical processes and environmental management.

Oil

Canada has in recent years seen a massive surge in its oil production, namely from the advancement in refining oil sands which were previously considered cost inefficient to extract and treat. This development has rocketed Canadian oil potential stock by 36 times. A graduate with knowledge or education in engineering could use this (still very much developing) opportunity to find work in the coming years.

Where to find more information

General information

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cntct/international-eng.html>

Canadian Chamber of Commerce

350 Sparks Street, Suite 501, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8, Canada,

Telephone: +1.613.238.4000

International Tax Services Office

2204 Walkley Road, Ottawa ON K1A 1A8, Canada

Telephone: +1.800.267.5177 (when calling from Canada or the United States)

Telephone: +1.613.952.3741 (when calling from other countries)

<http://www.canadacentre.com/> Canada Centre

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/> Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Advice and tips on Careers Fairs, CVs and general job seeking

www.articlealley.com/article_1547972_36.html - An article for those in the nursing profession.

www.collegegrad.com/articles/dont-give-up.shtml - An article on staying positive throughout the work search process

www.employmentblawg.com/2010/job-seeking-tips-for-college-graduates - Further tips in the competitive field of employment seeking graduates

www.fpef.org/Education/Tips.htm - Some good tips on networking

www.thegraduate.co.uk/static_generic.cgi?a=tmg_jobboards – Link with good information for those still considering staying in the UK after study

www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/graduates_with_disability - A link providing useful tips and stats for graduates with a disability

www.londongradfair.co.uk/autumn - The Guardian's annual job fair for graduates. It is located in London.

www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article1277.html - Tips on how to work out your finances post-study.

www.online-graduate.co.uk/tipsforgrads.html - Further tips for graduates seeking work experience.

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international_students.htm - Information for international students

Where to find more information

Books and Articles

Immigration Canada, Do-it-yourself Guide, O'Neil, L.Y., Wong, L.

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Disclaimer

Whilst all efforts have been made to ensure the information in this Country Guide is correct at the time of writing, readers are advised that procedures and information sources may change regularly.

Appendix 1 : Sample CV

Elizabeth Johnson

18 Park Road

Toronto, Canada

Telephone: +1.416.111.22.33

E-mail: johnson.e@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE: International Human Resources Manager

EDUCATION

- **MA, Company Law**
September 2008 University of Toulouse (France)
Minor: Labour Law
Selected coursework: Ownership, Commercial Law, Fundamentals of Management
- **BA, Business Administration**
September 2006 University of Toulouse (France)
Minor: Commerce and International Stakes
Selected coursework: International Institutions and International Issues, International Commercial Law

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2008 – present:
International Human Resources Assistant Manager at Sjuktof Groupe, Brazil
- 2006 – 2007:
International Transfer Officer at Friebkla Corporation, France (part time)

Appendix 1 : Sample Résumé

- June - Sept 2006:
Internship at Education International, Toronto
Co-ordinate a study project for new students, Toronto University Organised an event on the International Labour Market, AIESEC student body
- June - Sept 2005:
Internship Human Resources Department at Spanghero Firm, France
Performed review of HR policy manual with senior HR generalist culminating in a report to senior management with recommendations on outdated policies and those affected by new HR laws.

SKILLS

- Highly organised and dedicated, with positive attitude
- Have excellent written, oral and interpersonal communication skills
- Speak and write Spanish, French and English fluently
- Able to handle multiple assignments under high pressure and consistently meet tight deadlines

ACTIVITIES

- Volunteering: President Amnesty International Student Club, literacy courses in an orphanage
- Artistic activities: Classical and Contemporary Theatre/ Practice Music Afro-electro-jazz

REFERENCES

Available on request.