

Beyond the Degree: A Practical Guide to Becoming Hireable



What's the Trend

Contents

1 WELCOME

2 MY STORY & WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

3 UNDERSTANDING THE JOB MARKET

4 BUILDING A STRONG CV THAT GETS INTERVIEWS

9 CREATE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES

10 INTERVIEW READINESS

11 LEARN THE STAR METHOD

13 PREPARE TO ASK QUESTIONS

14 WAYS TO STAY GROUNDED DURING THE
PROCESS

15 REJECTION IS REDIRECTION

1 *Welcome*

Welcome to the “Graduate to Hireability” eBook. We’re pleased to have you here as you take this important step towards building confidence, clarity, and competitiveness in the job market.

Within these pages, you will find practical guidance, reflective exercises, and actionable strategies designed to help you strengthen your CV, improve your interview performance, and position yourself more effectively to employers.

Whether you are just beginning your career journey or refining your approach, this book is designed to support you in turning your academic experience into real-world opportunity.





MY STORY & WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Long story short, I graduated in 2020 into a job market that felt uncertain and unforgiving. After three years of studying law, I found myself on Universal Credit, searching for work and often doing so without clear direction or confidence.

In that period, I often wished I had something like this, something that would have grounded me, reassured me, and given me practical steps forward when everything felt unclear.

People don't talk enough about what life after university actually looks like. Yes, many graduates transition smoothly into work, but that is not the reality for everyone.

And when it is not, it can feel isolating and discouraging.

This eBook exists because that experience should not be faced alone.

3

Understanding the Job Market

THE REALITY OF COMPETITION

Graduate roles are highly competitive with many applicants for limited roles.

EXPECTATIONS

Employers want more than a degree, they want skills and evidence of capability

SKILLS

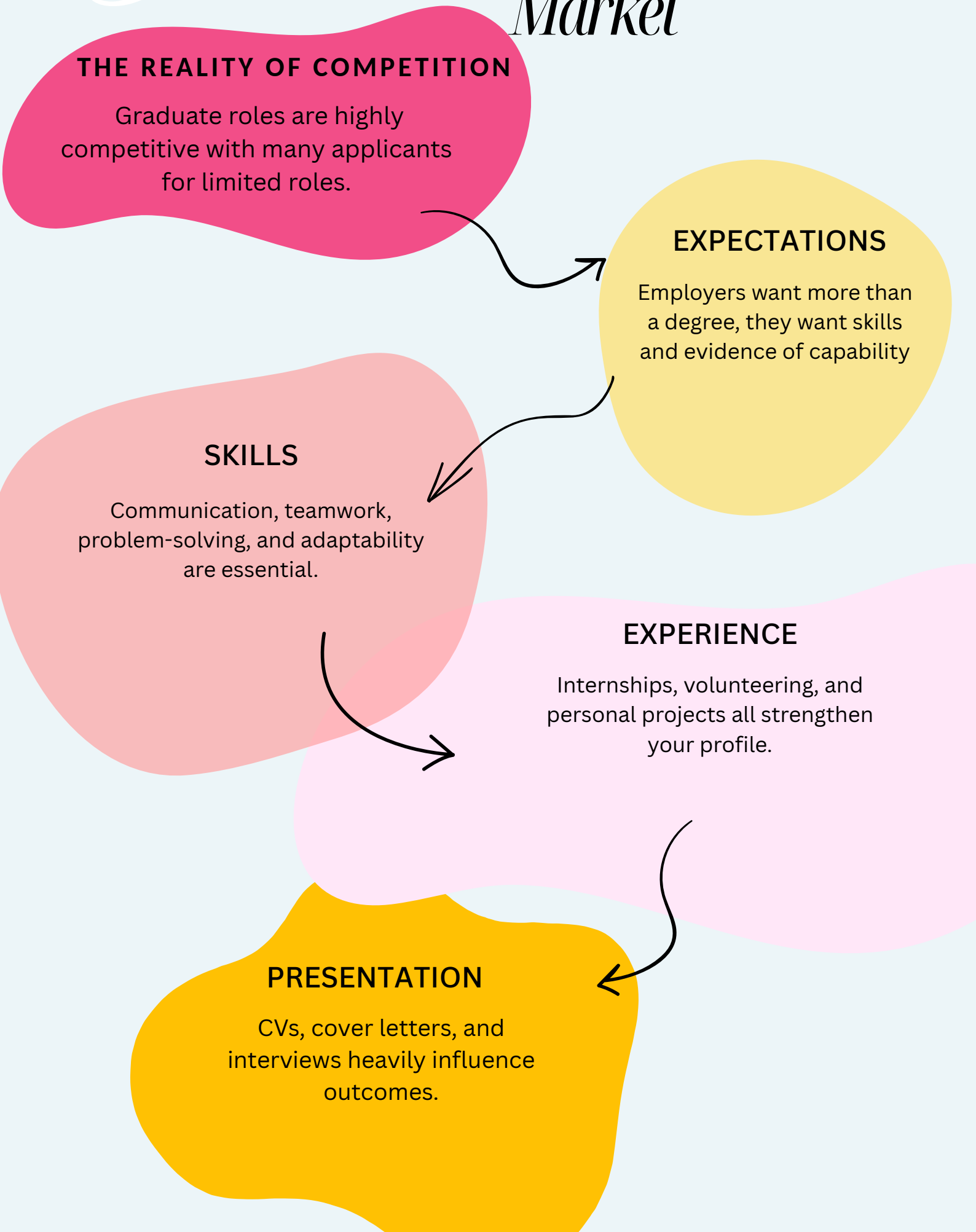
Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability are essential.

EXPERIENCE

Internships, volunteering, and personal projects all strengthen your profile.

PRESENTATION

CVs, cover letters, and interviews heavily influence outcomes.



4

Building a Strong CV That Gets Interviews

In today's job market, many companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and artificial intelligence (A.I.) software to scan CVs before a recruiter even sees them.

These systems are designed to identify keywords, qualifications, and relevant experience that match the job description. This means your CV needs to be not only professional and well-written, but also strategically tailored to pass these digital screening systems.

Four Practical Ways to Make Your CV Stand Out and Get Interviews

1. Tailor Your CV to Every Application

One of the biggest mistakes graduates make is sending the same CV to every employer. Recruiters can immediately tell when a CV is generic.

Study the job description carefully and identify:



5

- Key skills
- Required experience
- Repeated keywords
- Company values

Then reflect those keywords naturally throughout your CV.

If a role emphasises teamwork, communication, and research, include those terms in your experience and skills sections where relevant.



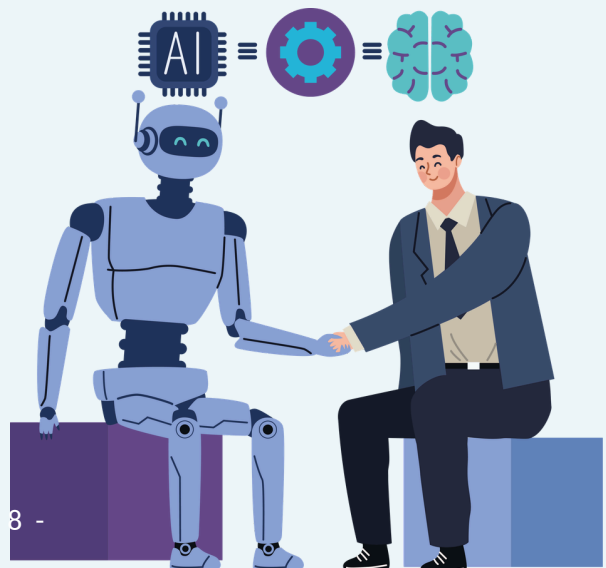
2. Use Keywords to Pass ATS Systems

Since many companies use A.I. screening tools, your CV should include industry-relevant keywords.

For example:

- “Project management”
- “Legal research”
- “Data analysis”
- “Client communication”
- “Microsoft Excel”
- “Team collaboration”

The goal is not to keyword stuff, but to align your experience with the language employers are already using.



• **INSTEAD OF
WRITING THIS:**

Responsible
for Social
Media

• **INSTEAD OF
WRITING THIS:**

Worked in
retail

Remember This:

YOUR CV SHOULD SHOW
CONTRIBUTION NOT
PARTICIPATION

3. Achievements

Focus on Achievements, Not
Responsibilities
Employers want to see impact

WRITE THIS:

Managed social
media content that
increased
engagement and
improved audience
interaction

• **WRITE THIS:**

Delivered customer
service in a fast-paced
environment while
handling high
transaction volumes
and resolving
customer queries
professionally

• **Don't forget
Figures**

Feel free to add
figures, this shows
how much of an
impact you're
making

8

4. KEEP THE LAYOUT CLEAN AND EASY TO READ

A cluttered CV can immediately reduce your chances of progressing.

- Keep your formatting:
- Simple
- Professional
- Consistent

USE:

Clear headings

- Bullet points
- Readable fonts
- Enough spacing
- Avoid excessive colours, graphics, or overly creative designs unless you are applying for a creative industry role.



9 *Create your Own Experiences*

In a competitive job market, waiting for the “perfect opportunity” is often a delay tactic disguised as preparation. Instead, actively build the experience you wish to be hired for

VOLUNTEER

Gain practical skills while supporting a cause or organisation

BUILD PROJECTS

Start a blog, portfolio, podcast, business idea, or creative project

CREATE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE

FREELANCE

Start selling a service, digital product, or creative skill on platforms like Etsy, Upwork, or Fiverr to gain experience, build confidence, and create real-world proof of your abilities.

LEARN INDEPENDANTLY

Take online courses, workshops, or certifications to strengthen your skills. E.g Coursera/STRIVE Traing/Udemy

10

Develop Interview Readiness

Getting an interview is already a sign that an employer sees potential in you.

The next step is learning how to communicate your experiences, skills, and personality with clarity and confidence.



- Do timed mock interviews (not just reading answers)
- Set a timer and practise answering common questions without notes.
- This helps you get used to pressure and stops you from relying on scripts.
- Record yourself on your phone and listen back for clarity, pace, and filler words like “um” or “like.”

Situation

WHAT HAPPENED?

Task

**WHAT NEEDED TO
BE DONE?**

Action

What did you do?

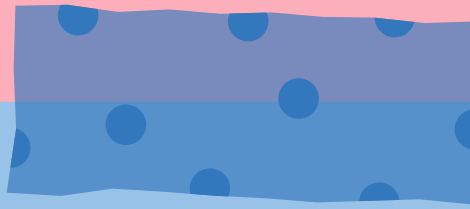
Result

What was the Outcome?

**LEARN
THE STAR
METHOD**

11

```
graph LR; S[Situation] --- C[LEARN THE STAR METHOD]; T[Task] --- C; A[Action] --- C; R[Result] --- C;
```



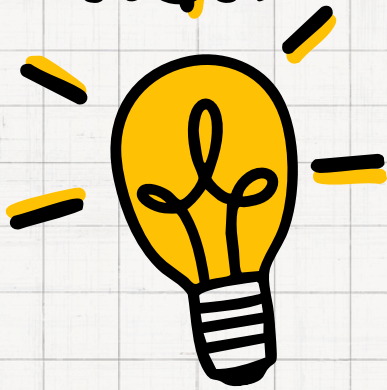
Research the role beyond the job description

Go deeper than the advert. Look at the organisation's recent projects, news, LinkedIn posts, and values.

Then link your answers back to specific things they actually do, not generic statements.

This instantly makes you sound more prepared and credible.

13 **PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK**



An interview is often framed as a one way assessment.

The employer asks questions, and the candidate answers.

But in reality, a strong interview is a two way conversation.

**ASKING QUESTIONS IS NOT AN
OPTIONAL EXTRA AT THE END. IT IS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO
DEMONSTRATE HOW YOU THINK,
WHAT YOU VALUE, AND WHETHER
YOU ARE GENUINELY ENGAGED
WITH THE ROLE.**

1

What does success in this role look like?

2

What opportunities are there for development?

3

What do you enjoy most about working here?

4

How would you describe the culture of the organisation and the way teams collaborate?

14 Practical ways to stay grounded during the process

01

Detach your worth from outcomes

A rejection is not a reflection of your intelligence or potential. It is simply one data point in a much larger journey.

02

Track your progress visually

Keep a record of applications, skills gained, and small wins so you can see movement even when results feel slow.

03

Limit over-applying in one sitting

Batch applications to avoid burnout and emotional fatigue from constant rejection cycles.

04

Create balance outside job searching

Make space for rest, hobbies, exercise, or creative work so your identity is not centred only on applications.

05

Talk about it

Isolation makes rejection heavier. Speaking to peers, mentors, or communities helps you stay perspective-led

Final Chapter: Rejection is Redirection

The job market can be tough. There is no way around that. You can do everything “right” and still face rejection, silence, or delayed responses. Over time, this can start to affect your confidence and make you question your ability, your direction, and even your worth.

It is important to recognise that rejection in the job market is not always a reflection of your capability. Often, it is a result of timing, competition, internal hiring decisions, or simply the volume of applicants.

None of these define your value.

But that does not mean it is easy. Repeated applications and unanswered emails can slowly chip away at your self-esteem if you do not have systems in place to protect your mindset.

So keep going, it will get Better!

THE
END