

# Using Recruitment Consultants

**Careers & Employability Service**

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**[www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides)**



**Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University**

This document is available in alternative formats – Please contact [careers@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:careers@mmu.ac.uk) for details.

## **Introduction**

It is impossible to list all Recruitment Consultants and Agencies. The numbers are vast and the sector is very fluid with regular new business start ups and others ceasing to exist. The main professional body for the sector is The Recruitment & Employment Confederation and you can search Consultants and Agencies by location and type of work (eg Manchester & Accountancy) via their web site [www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com)

This guide is therefore meant to provide a brief explanation of how Agencies and Consultants operate and point you in the direction of some of our other handouts which give details of Agencies and Consultants who specialise in specific sectors. There are also some brief notes on how consultancies work, and some tips on negotiating salary and terms and conditions.

## **Recruitment Agencies and Recruitment Consultancies**

These businesses earn money by charging the client (employer) for each successful placement or a percentage of the hourly rate if temporary. You should never be requested to pay a fee for someone to find you employment.

There are two distinct types of recruitment business; agencies or consultancies.

### **Agencies**

Tend to focus on generalist administrative or manual labour opportunities and be of more use to the temporary or part time job hunters. They will also have a high street presence, many being household names.

Unlike the University Careers Service they are not employed to support and guide you – their role is to provide the ‘temp’ that their client needs for a specific task. Good ones will help give advice on your CV and be clear about the progression and opportunities in the future; i.e. take this job data inputting which is minimum wage, but if you do well you could get involved with creating monthly reports on excel and liaise with accounts. Because of the fast pace of the temping market the more flexible and quick you are to make decisions, the more useful you are to the agency.

Once you have started temping you may be able to use temping to work within the sector you aspire to for your career. Although you will not be in the role or salary you want from a ‘career’. Make the most of the culture you go into by finding out what other people do and how they reached their position but don’t lose sight of why you are there – the company is paying both you and the agency to get a task done, however menial it may be.

### **Consultancies**

Focus on specific professional areas such as PR, marketing, accountancy, engineering etc. These will be more likely to advertise on specific job boards (websites) and tend to be of use to candidates who have relevant experience. There are specialist graduate recruitment consultancies which can be searched through [www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com) and some are

also highlighted in the guides mentioned below. You should always endeavour to meet recruitment consultants as this forms a stronger relationship (which is important for them to understand your career aspirations) and helps them to remember you, as they will meet many people over the course of a week.

For many, recruitment consultants become very important as their career progresses, and in some sectors e.g. Fashion & Textiles they are major sources of vacancies.

## **Negotiation**

Occasionally graduates need to negotiate their salary, or aspects of a package offered by the employer. This is rare because most graduate entry roles sit within a salary structure, especially within large commercial companies and all public sector roles. A situation where you are most likely to have to negotiate your package will be with commercial, Small Medium Enterprises (SME).

If you are without work experience you may not have much to negotiate with the employer – they hold most of the cards. As your career progresses negotiation will become more a part of each move as your experience and knowledge enhance your competitive edge against other candidates.

Negotiation occurs at the offer stage or during the final interview.

- Commercial roles, such as sales have very different rules. As part of your job will be negotiation, demonstrating your business acumen is an opportunity to ‘sell yourself’ as well as establish what you want from the employer.
- Negotiation is not just about salary. A package is made up of many benefits, as well as salary and in some cases bonus and commission structures. Researching this is delicate – questions regarding holidays, salary, company cars etc should never be asked by the candidate. It gives the wrong impression and shows lack of interview etiquette.
- Establishing package details can be done calling the HR department before or after your interview. Asking the question ‘how can I find out details of the package offered with this role?’ sounds more positive than ‘what is the salary, holiday allowance and company car?’ How they answer will give you an insight into the company’s culture. At this point you may be told that salary and package is negotiated on an individual basis. If so ask what the ball park salary range is and what criteria are applied when deciding.

## **Tips on How to Negotiate**

- If asked what salary you would accept in an interview situation, avoid giving a specific figure as this could either price you out of the job, or sell yourself short of a higher salary. There are a number of ways to tackle this;
  - Explain you have researched the market rate for the role as being between £X.000 and £Y.000 and would be happy to discuss it in the wider context of the package if successful.
  - The job and progression are more important and you want to discuss that in more detail.
- The better your research into the company, culture and sector, the stronger your facts will be in supporting your case. For instance, highlighting the same job at different companies and their pros and cons shows how serious you are about career priorities.
- If you are at a similar stage with another employer (perhaps one of their competitors), you may end up with a timing issue. Should you need to delay accepting an offer while waiting for an interview with the other employer, what you have said at interview will support asking employer number one to delay. Don't feel pressured into accepting the package and job – how they handle this will tell you about them as an employer. See [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job\\_offers.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job_offers.htm) for tips on job offers.

Examples of items for negotiation:

Start date

Study support (financial)

Study/exam leave

Basic Salary

Salary Progression

Commission guarantee / commission structure

## **Other Useful Handouts**

MMU Careers & Employability Service has written a wide range of job seeking and sector specific handouts (see below) which also include some information on Recruitment Consultancies and Agencies. These are available in hard copy and through our web site at [www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides)

- How to find local vacancies in Manchester & the North West
- Job Vacancy Websites (including Graduate Schemes)
- Looking for Part-Time or Temporary Work
- Opportunities in the Public & Not for Profit Sectors
- Art & Design Careers Websites
- Recruitment Consultants for Fashion & Textiles
- Media Careers Websites
- Environmental Websites
- Scientists Seeking Employment
- Languages Recruitment Consultants & Agencies
- Finding Vacancies: Teaching & Support Staff