Architecture and Construction

The labour market in the construction industry has been very strong over recent years but it is tied to the overall health of the economy so is often one of the first sectors to react to changes in the economy. Reading Construction graduates have very high employment rates and are regularly employed by some of the largest and most prestigious construction companies. Organisations that have worked with Reading in recent years include Balfour Beatty, Bam Construct UK, Barratt Developments, Kier Group, Skanska, AECOM and Mott MacDonald. Key transferable skills required by employers depend on the role, but usually include interpersonal skills such as communication, team working, negotiation and leadership skills. Other sought-after skills are: problem solving and attention to detail, spatial sense, dexterity and numeracy. More technical skills include IT skills and computer-aided design.

To succeed in the graduate job market relevant work experience is key. Try to get a variety of experience as this will help you discover what suits you. Initially this could be an informal placement with a smaller organisation. Work shadowing is a really good first step as an introduction to a career area that interests you. Some larger organisations offer a year in industry, vacation placements and internships. These are sometimes used to recruit for graduate training schemes. It is important to start looking into placement and internship schemes as early as possible. If you are struggling to find directly related experience, you could consider volunteering projects that involve construction. These can include projects abroad building local amenities such as schools.

Building a network of contacts is a great way to gain knowledge about the industry and find work experience. Fellow students and graduates from your course, academics, visiting employers and guest speakers can all be useful. Attending careers fairs and joining relevant professional organisations are other ways to extend your network. Networking can also help identify possible opportunities. Small companies do not always advertise vacancies, but may be able to offer opportunities. You can enquire about work experience by applying speculatively with a CV and covering letter outlining what you want to do, what you can offer, why you have applied, and when you are available.

Successful applications and interviews require research, understanding, and the ability to articulate a number of key factors to an employer. These factors include knowing about the role, the employer and the industry. It is also important to be able to prove to employers that you have the relevant technical and transferable skills to succeed in the industry. Employers want to see your enthusiasm and motivation for working in construction. This can be demonstrated by your work experience, your knowledge of current issues in the industry and your interest in the organisation itself. This can relate to projects they have been involved in and their expertise in a certain area.

Key Resources

Prospects sector briefing on Property and Construction

Contains an overview of the sector, occupational profiles for jobs in construction and architecture, how to find a job and professional development

Target Jobs Career Sector - Quantity and Building Surveying

Includes a comprehensive range of information and advice on careers in the sector. Also advice on securing a job in the industry and adverts for placements and graduate jobs.
Target Jobs Career sector – Construction and Building Services
Contains advice on careers in architecture, construction management and facilities management, including all aspects of job hunting, finding work experience and making applications

CITB
Is the industry training board and a partner in the sector skills council for the construction industry in England, Scotland and Wales. There is a careers section with information on how to get into the industry and what it’s like to work in construction

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Has a comprehensive section on becoming an architect

RIBA Appointments
Has sections on job adverts, a search facility for finding recruiters and a careers section with advice about getting into the industry

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
The body that accredits professionals within the land, property and construction sectors

RICS Recruit
Covers surveying jobs in land, construction and property worldwide and a careers advice section

Some useful online recruitment websites include:
Building Design Jobs
Building4jobs
Careers in Construction
These websites advertise jobs in the construction industry. Some are just UK based, others are international. You can register for job alerts and search the database for recruiters. They also have a careers section and some have FAQs.

You may also be interested in...

• The Environment
• Property