



Managing mental health in recruitment

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Careers & Employability

www.uolcareers.co.uk

careers@lincoln.ac.uk

01522 837 828

The Careers & Employability centre is on the ground floor of the University Library. We are open from 9:00am - 4:30pm, Monday - Friday.

Student Wellbeing Centre

Visit the [Student Services page](#) for up to date opening times and contact details.

This guide has been created to provide you with strategies and support for managing your mental health during the recruitment process when you are applying for graduate roles. We understand that it can be a stressful period when you are applying for graduate roles, we have designed this guide with this in mind.

This guide aims to help you:

- Recognise challenges you may face when transitioning to graduate employment.
- Identify wellbeing techniques and how to apply these to recruitment stages.
- Analyse the support you may need and how to ask for it.

Whether you have previously faced mental health difficulties or not, applying for graduate roles can be a stressful process. This guide will hopefully support you to reduce overwhelm during your career planning.



Tips for managing self care

Focus on self-care: sleep, good food and exercise are an important part of maintaining our mental health, yet these can be easily impacted when we are feeling stressed about our career plans. Make time to get proper rest, eat good food and enjoy some exercise or hobbies in between job applications.

Seek support: Remember you aren't alone in your career planning. We have a professional team of advisers who are here to help with every step of your career planning. You can also think about who else can support you while you are job search or starting a new role, do you have classmates, friends, colleagues, or family you can make contact with?

Plan ahead: Reduce overwhelm by making sure you plan ahead as much as possible. This will allow you to have plenty of time to research options and access the support you need, all whilst prioritising self-care.

More information and resources can be found through our online [Mental Health Hub](#).



Job searching

Quality over quantity - Although job searching is important, make sure you are keeping time for other things you enjoy. By using strategies to manage your stress levels and reduce overwhelm, you will be able to spend time submitting higher quality applications.

Where to search – We recommend using reputable websites such as CareerLinc, Bright Network, or company specific sites. These are reliable websites where employers will be uploading their roles. For support in your job search, you can access support through our Graduate Recruitment page.

Seeking feedback – It is important to gain feedback on your CV and applications. You can receive feedback on your CV, cover letter, speculative letter, or application from our Graduate Recruitment advisers. You can also reach out to employers for feedback if you attend an interview but are not selected for the position. This can be a positive way to improve your applications whilst creating a positive relationship with employers.

Healthy habits – Make sure to prioritise time for yourself and look after yourself. Make time to get proper rest, eat good food and enjoy some exercise or hobbies in between job applications.

Set realistic targets – No one can job search 7 days a week. Be kind to yourself and allow yourself regular breaks. Ensure you are making time for things you enjoy and give yourself time to focus on self-care.

Activity: How will you prioritise self-care during your job search?

Job interview tips

It is likely that you will attend a job interview during the recruitment process, this section includes our top tips for interviews as well as information on further support you can access.



Prepare & practice – Prepare some notes including examples of your experience which is relevant to the role you are applying for. Practice reading through these and including them in practice answers. It is important to practice speaking your answers out loud, you can find example interview questions in our **Applications to acceptance booklet**.

Hydrate – Bring a bottle of water to your interview so you can stay hydrated. When we become stressed, a drink may be able to cool you down. This can also help you if you get stuck on an answer to a question. You can take a pause and have some water which will give you some added time to construct an answer.

Dress smartly and comfortably – An interview is your chance to make a positive impression. Even if conducting a video interview, ensure you are able to dress the part so the impression you leave is the right one. Check carefully if the employer has detailed a dress code, otherwise assume you should dress in smart business-casual or a work suit dependant on the role. You can visit the SU Swap Shop to find appropriate interview attire or look through charity shops on the high street.

Reasonable adjustments – Under **The Equality Act 2010** a disability is defined as having a “physical or mental impairment that lasts for 12 months and has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long term’ negative effect on your ability carry out normal day to day activities.”

The act states that “Employers have a duty to make “reasonable adjustments” to ensure that a disabled employee is not treated less favourably than their non-disabled counterpart.” This applies to the recruitment process and employment. More information can be found on page 9.

Interview Support

For additional information and support surrounding interviews, please visit the Careers & Employability **interview support page**.

The STAR technique

STAR technique – Use the STAR technique to structure your answers and demonstrate how you meet the role requirements.

Situation: A Situation will cover a place you were working, a project you were involved in or some sort of challenge that you were faced with. Think through places you have worked, assignments you have worked on at university, or similar.

Task: You might like to think of this step as 'Target' instead - within the Situation or challenge you came across, what was required of you? What was your motivation/ goal?

Action: What did you do in order to achieve your Task and why? To explain yourself, you might like to outline why you chose this course of action instead of any alternatives that might have presented themselves within the Situation.

Result: What happened as a Result of your Action - did you accomplish your Task? How did it affect the Situation? Regardless of your success, what did you learn? Numbers always impress, so use them if possible (eg. 'Increased sales by 50%')

Practice using the STAR technique to answer this question; Can you tell us about a time you faced an obstacle and how you overcame this?

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Your wellbeing pre-interview

Managing self-care:

Sleep: Improves attention and concentration, improves mood, memory retention and recall, maintains emotional and mental wellbeing, reduces overall stress levels.

Diet and exercise: Be careful of caffeine (no energy drinks), sugar, nicotine, and alcohol – these can all impact your mood, concentration, and stress.

Positive self-talk: Self-talk is your internal dialogue and can influence your sub conscience. Positive self-talk can be encouraging and can make you feel more hopeful and positive about a situation. First, identify negative thinking. Second, work to turn them into positive thinking (practice this!)

Example of Positive self-talk

Negative: I've never done this before and I'll be bad at it.

Positive: This is a good opportunity for me to test and develop myself.

Organise:

Preparation: What questions will they ask? Practice your responses. Do the research and prepare some questions to ask the panel. **Prospects** has some great suggested questions for employers!

Managing variables: What could increase my stress in this situation? Plan your journey, where you will park, where is the interview, have I brought water etc. You can find an 'interview preparation checklist' in our **Applications to Acceptance booklet**.

How will I manage stress and anxiety during interview: What tools do I have at my disposal?

Notes:

Your wellbeing during interview

Normalise:

- Nerves are to be expected: all interviewees will experience nerves. Acknowledge your nerves and focus on managing the factors you can control (first impression, your knowledge of the role and company).
- Allowing silence: Pausing to formulate a well-formed answer is far more positive than launching into an answer without a clear direction.
- Power of reiteration: Acknowledging when you do not understand the question, or when you have lost your way during an answer. Honesty is a good quality.

Delivering presentations:

- Using PowerPoint Presenter view shows you your current slide, the next slide, and your speaker notes, to help you focus while presenting and connecting with your audience.
- PowerPoint Speaker Coach gives you an opportunity to rehearse your presentation whilst receiving real-time feedback, helping you to improve your presentation skills and build your confidence.
- PresentPal is a presentation support software which enables users to deliver a more confident and prepared presentation. It is often available to students receiving Disabled Student Allowance.

Coping in the moment:

- Feel your feet on the ground: Press your feet down firmly. Feeling the ground beneath you connects you to the present moment and the space you're in.
- Box breathing: Inhale for four, hold for four, exhale for four, hold your lungs empty for four, and repeat.

Activity: Try these exercises and reflect on how you feel below:

Your wellbeing post-interview

Managing emotions:

- Self-compassion: Very few people ace their first interview, this is a learning process, allow yourself time to constructively reflect and allow yourself to be compassionate regarding the things that didn't go to plan. You are learning and you will get there.
- Avoiding unhelpful post-interview analysis: You can't change the past, reflect constructively and don't deconstruct your interview moment by moment. You will always forget something.

Celebrate your achievement:

- Plan something you enjoy post-interview: Applying for a job and getting through an interview is an achievement. Every time you fill in an application or have an interview, you're becoming more experienced and confident.

What to do when you are unsuccessful:

- Keep it in context, the interview is still good experience for you to have and it is an achievement to reach the interview stage. Ask for feedback from the employer, this may be able to highlight gaps in skills, experience and how can these be address. Remind yourself what made you a strong candidate.

Activity: What is something you enjoy which you could plan to do after your interview?

If you would like to access further support with any job applications you have made, please get in touch with **Careers & Employability**.

We can support you with job searches, making applications, updating your CV and cover letter, and interview preparation - among many other forms of support including our **online resources page**!

The Careers & Employability centre is on the ground floor of the University Library. We are open from 9:00am - 4:30pm, Monday - Friday.

Reasonable adjustments

If you have a physical or mental health condition which is likely to last more than 12 months and has a negative impact on your ability to carry out normal day to day activity, you may be protected by The Equality Act. That's because the law is likely to consider you to meet the legal definition of disability.

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the application process or workplace, which reduce barriers and increase accessibility.

***Under the Equality Act (2010) you are disabled if you have a long-term physical or mental health condition which has lasted or is likely to last 12 months or more and causes a significant impact on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.**

This can include chronic illnesses, physical and mental health conditions, and neurodivergent conditions.

Reasonable adjustments for interviews can include, but are not limited to:

- Providing a sign language interpreter for someone who is deaf.
- Making sure your office is accessible for an applicant who uses a wheelchair.
- Giving someone more time to do a written test that is part of an interview.
- Receiving interview questions 24 hours in advance.
- Adjustment of perception, e.g. for it not to be assumed that you aren't passionate about the role due to your body language.

Always request the adjustments as soon as you are notified of the interview (don't wait until you get there!) and ask for confirmation in writing / by a particular date. This will ensure you have evidence of what is agreed, in the unlikely case that you would need to challenge the company.

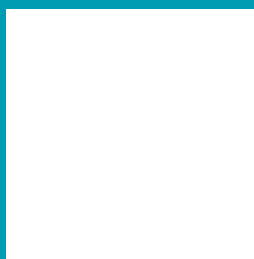


You do not need to tell an employer what your condition is! They do not need to know why you need extra time, why you can't stand for long periods of time, why you find it difficult to make eye contact – and they shouldn't ask!



Further support

The Careers & Employability service offers a wide range of support to help you into your future career. Head to our [online tool](#) to be directed to the most appropriate support for your query.



Visit our [Diversity, Equality, and Mental Health hub](#) for further resources to support your career planning.

For more support regarding reasonable adjustments, book a career coaching appointment with Becki, email rcommins@lincoln.ac.uk

Career coaching can help you to identify and achieve their career goals whilst accessing support and resources tailored to your needs. Coaching involves a collaborative conversation between a coach, and the individual, where the coach asks questions and provides support, to help you to find solutions and reach your desired outcomes.

Why book a career coaching appointment?

1. Becki understands the unique challenges faced by disabled students. She will be able to work with you to explore your options and identify the steps needed for achieving your goals.
2. If you have a disability or health condition, Becki can offer general information about reasonable adjustments in recruitment and direct you to further support in accessing these.
3. Attending an appointment can highlight other areas of the [Careers & Employability](#) service which may be of use to you in your career planning journey.

To access support from the Student Wellbeing team, visit the [Student Services page](#) for up to date contact information and opening times.