

Retail job hunting action plan for university students



Non-finalists

- Get the year off to a good start by making sure you keep on top of your academic work. There are retail graduate schemes that require a 2.1 before you will be considered, although some retailers accept a 2.2.
- Become actively involved in running a university society. It can develop the leadership, communication and organisational skills that will help you go far in retail.
- Start your search for internship opportunities in retail for the summer. Deadlines vary but some schemes close for applications in December and January – for example, Tesco's general merchandise internship has had a January deadline in the past.
- Discover what your university's careers service has to offer – it will have relationships with top retailers and can offer support ranging from checking over applications and CVs to holding mock interviews. Check TARGETjobs' retail career advice for details on finding a role in retail.

Finalists

- Find out which jobs and careers fairs will be held at your university and which employers will be attending by searching your careers service website. It is rare to find a jobs fair that is aimed solely at the retail industry but many of the big employers will attend general events.
- A number of retail graduate schemes have deadlines between December and February, so take care to fill in your application properly and send it in as soon as it's ready. Some retailers recruit graduates all year round so it's worth keeping up the search throughout your final year. Check TARGETjobs for the latest job listings.
- It's likely that you will be asked to complete online psychometric tests in the first stages of the application process, so check out our tips for success.
- You could start investigating your options for postgraduate study but first speak to retail employers to get their opinion on whether it will be beneficial.



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- Continue to search and apply for formal work experience opportunities – some recruiters keep their schemes open until March. If you're seeking a part-time job, consider one with a retailer you hope to work for. Many retail recruiters look favourably on applicants who've worked for them on a part-time basis.
- Think of ways you can develop the skills that employers will be looking for. For example, volunteering either on a project abroad or in the UK.
- Retail is a competitive industry where contacts count, so get networking early to give your job hunt a good start. Create a LinkedIn account and connect with recruiters and industry professionals.

Finalists

- Interviews and assessment centres for graduate schemes are often held in January and February – follow these tips to make sure you stand out.
- Do some competitor analysis. Retail employers will want someone who understands every part of their operations and are likely to ask you for your opinion of their competitors at interview. Visit the stores of both the employer you've got an interview with and their competitors. Analyse their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. experience with smaller employers, work shadowing and volunteering.



Non-finalists

- Check your social media presence to ensure that there is nothing that would put an employer off if they searched for you. Check your privacy settings.
- If you are in your penultimate year, make notes of your achievements so far and any challenges you have overcome, as these examples will come in handy during future applications and interviews. Find times when you helped to manage a project or inspired other people into action.

Finalists

- Remember that some retail graduate schemes recruit all year round, so if you've had no luck yet, it's worth checking out the graduate jobs listings on TARGETjobs to find the latest opportunities.
- If you've been selected to take part in a university end-of-year fashion show as part of your degree in fashion design, make the most of any chance to talk to guest employers and demonstrate your enthusiasm for the industry.



Non-finalists

- If you have gained a place on an internship, treat it as an extended job interview. Once your internship has ended, update your CV to show your achievements.
- Do some summer reading. The performance of retailers is always in the news – find out what's going on at top retailers. Keep a record of key stories about notable successes and challenges.

Finalists

- Have you managed to find a job? If so, congratulations – retail is a busy environment so enjoy the break and make sure you are rested and ready to begin work.
- If not, start thinking about your next step. Some retail graduate schemes may still be open and you may be able to find ad hoc vacancies on TARGETjobs.
- If you decide to take some time off to go travelling, you can use the experience to demonstrate valuable skills. Deciding how you are going to finance your journey will test your ability to work to a budget, a vital skill for a buyer, for example. Retailers want someone who can make decisions on limited information, so being able to overcome unexpected problems while travelling could actually help set you up for a career in retail.

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