Researching careers information

When you start considering your career options, you’ll need to research different careers, types of work and job sectors. It’s important to spend some time on this as it can help you with weighing-up the advantages and disadvantages of different options, which can assist your decision making. It will also help you to identify typical skills, qualifications and experience required in different careers and may even alert you to careers you weren’t aware of.

Careers information
This can be background information you find in your career planning research. It may include information about different types of work:
- the typical tasks involved in the role
- entry routes into the work or sector and typical career paths
- who employs in this area, where jobs are advertised, and related jobs
- other related information resources, such as professional associations and further reading

You can find a lot of this information on our website at www.york.ac.uk/careers/sectors and by reading about real life experiences of York graduates on our York Profiles and Mentors platform.

Using Social Media
Social media and networking sources can help you research the job market. They can give you a more personal view of what’s happening in sectors, as well as providing you with the information in an easily accessible format. See the information sheet Successful Networking for more information and ideas (www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets).

Get a broader overview of a sector with labour market information?
LMI or labour market information (sometimes also called labour market intelligence) includes reports, studies, statistics and other information about:
- industry / sector growth and decline
- occupational information
- employment rates
- supply and demand of labour
- future labour trends
- wages and pay rates.

Why is LMI important for job hunters?
It can help you:
- Identify the sectors where there is growth and the possibility of jobs. Don’t just look at the current situation, but use LMI trends to identify where the jobs may be in the future
- Demonstrate to potential employers your understanding of the environment in which they operate. Many employers comment on candidates’ lack of knowledge about the sector or industry to which they are applying. As well as researching the job and the individual company, make sure you know what issues the sector is facing, who are the main organisations in the sector, and what the future might hold for it.
• With interview questions, particularly regarding understanding the industry and what faces the company and that tricky question about “where do you see yourself in five years’ time?”

Effective researching and evaluating
It is important to find the most relevant and reliable information when researching careers information and LMI. The following information sources should be your first resources.

- **Careers and Placements resources**
  - www.york.ac.uk/careers – for starting points and other useful resources, including Job sector pages, with LMI
  - Information sheets – www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets - especially Considering series for links
  - Our Job Sector pages www.york.ac.uk/careers/sectors – links to key information sources including professional bodies
  - Careers and Placements Information Room – reference books and journals, covering different job sectors, LMI, international work and study, and free careers magazines and directories.

- **External resources**
  - Professional associations www.totalprofessions.com/profession-finder
  - Sector Skills Councils listed with the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards www.fissss.org/sector-skills-council-body
  - The Business Desk (www.thebusinessdesk.com) regional business news for Yorkshire, North West England and West Midlands)
  - Chambers of Commerce www.britishchambers.org.uk
  - Trade journals www.newsstand.co.uk
  - Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) are locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs www.lepnetwork.org.uk
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS) – UK labour market
  - Research organisations such as Institute of Employment Studies www.employment-studies.co.uk
  - Employer websites
  - Newspapers, trade journals and their associated websites.

Evaluating information
As with any information, don’t automatically accept everything you read. Some information, particularly web-based, can easily be produced and could just be expressing someone’s personal opinion, rather than being based on accurate information and facts.
You should try and confirm its:
• accuracy
• relevancy
• reliability
• currency
• authenticity
Top tips:

- Start with our Careers and Placements website [www.york.ac.uk/careers](http://www.york.ac.uk/careers) and the Graduate Prospects website [www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice) – written by careers professionals, whose expertise you should be able to rely on.
- Check dates – things get posted and websites get created, but then may not be updated.
- Compare information with other reliable sources – if it’s saying something completely different or contradictory to a reliable source (such as a professional body) then treat with extreme caution.
- Be cautious with blogs, wikis, web forums, social network sites, because while you can often pick up some useful information, opinion can be passed off as ‘fact’.

Please note: The websites listed here are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. Careers and Placements cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites.