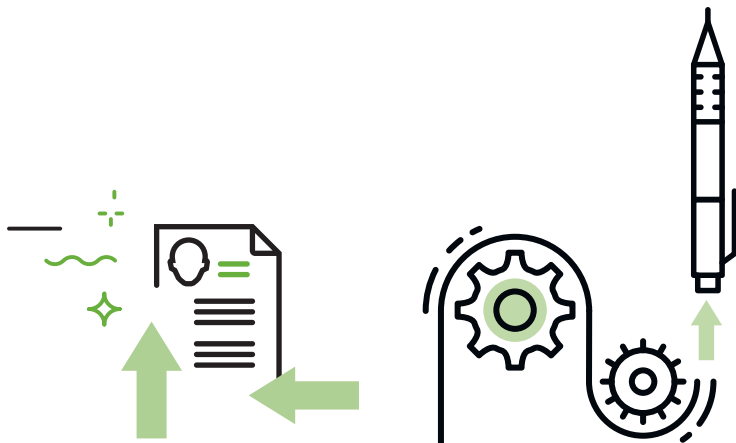




## What is a speculative application?



**A speculative application is when you contact employers that you are interested in working with even though they are not advertising the job role you want to do. The idea is that you get in touch anyway to see if something could be arranged.**



## Is this something I should be thinking about?

Speculative applications can be a great way of finding work or work experience, especially if you are struggling to find work that suits you, either because there aren't many advertised opportunities or because you are restricted with the time that you can work. For instance, many internships are advertised in the summer, if you are busy in the summer but would have time to work over Easter, it would be worth contacting employers to see if anything could be arranged at a time that is mutually convenient instead.

You may think that if an employer isn't advertising a role then they won't want or need an extra employee, but you never know. Many smaller organisations may be interested in working with students or recent graduates, but just don't have the time to advertise a role or simply haven't considered an internship before. At the very least you could find out when an employer is planning on advertising future roles.



# How to make a strong speculative application

## Step 1 Confidence

Some people are intimidated by the idea of getting in touch with an employer out of the blue and it can often feel like you are asking for a favour. Counteract this by thinking about what you have to offer an employer. Write a list of your strengths and skills from work experience, study and extra-curricular activities and think about how an employer could benefit from them.

## Step 2 Network

### *Do you already have a great contact?*

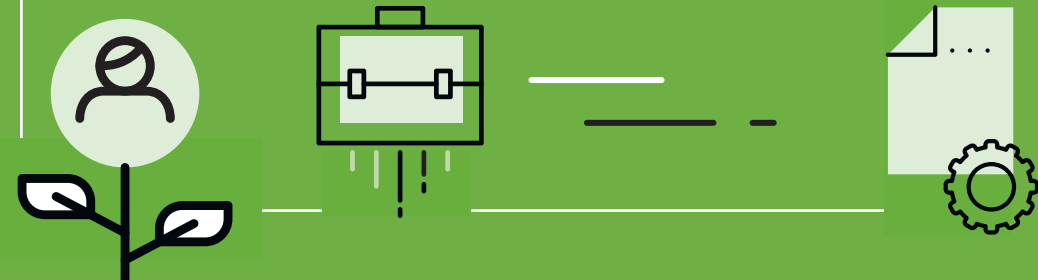
When you have an idea of the kind of work you would like to do, a simple thing you can do is consider whether you know anybody who works in that area already or who could potentially know somebody useful. For example, you may want to work in marketing but not know anybody who does this. You may find though, if you ask around, that a friend knows somebody who works in marketing and could put you in touch with them, or, that although a family member works in a non-marketing role, they are friends with colleagues in the marketing department of the large company they work for, and again, could put you in touch with the right people. This can be a great start, as making sure that your application is read by the right person is often a tricky part of making a speculative enquiry.

### *LinkedIn*

If you don't already have a great contact, you can try to find one on LinkedIn. You can sign up for an account for free, once signed up, you will have access to Huddersfield alumni profiles through the University of Huddersfield LinkedIn page. The database of alumni profiles is searchable, so it is easy to find somebody with common ground who works in the area you are interested in. From here, you can ask for advice on gaining work experience or information on who can be contacted in their company to send an application to. You can also use LinkedIn to find companies and organisations that do the kind of work you are interested in.

## Step 3 Research

It is really important when you send in your full speculative application to an employer that you appear professional, enthusiastic and (when searching for a job or lengthy internship) useful. It will be really hard to do that without understanding who you are talking to. This means you need to research the sector that they work in, the products or services that the employer offers, who they are competing with and the values that drive them. You can search employer websites and local news for information. For sector insights, blogs and magazines can be a good resource. Of course, if you have found a good contact in an organisation, you can also ask for their advice as well.



## Step 4 Get in Touch

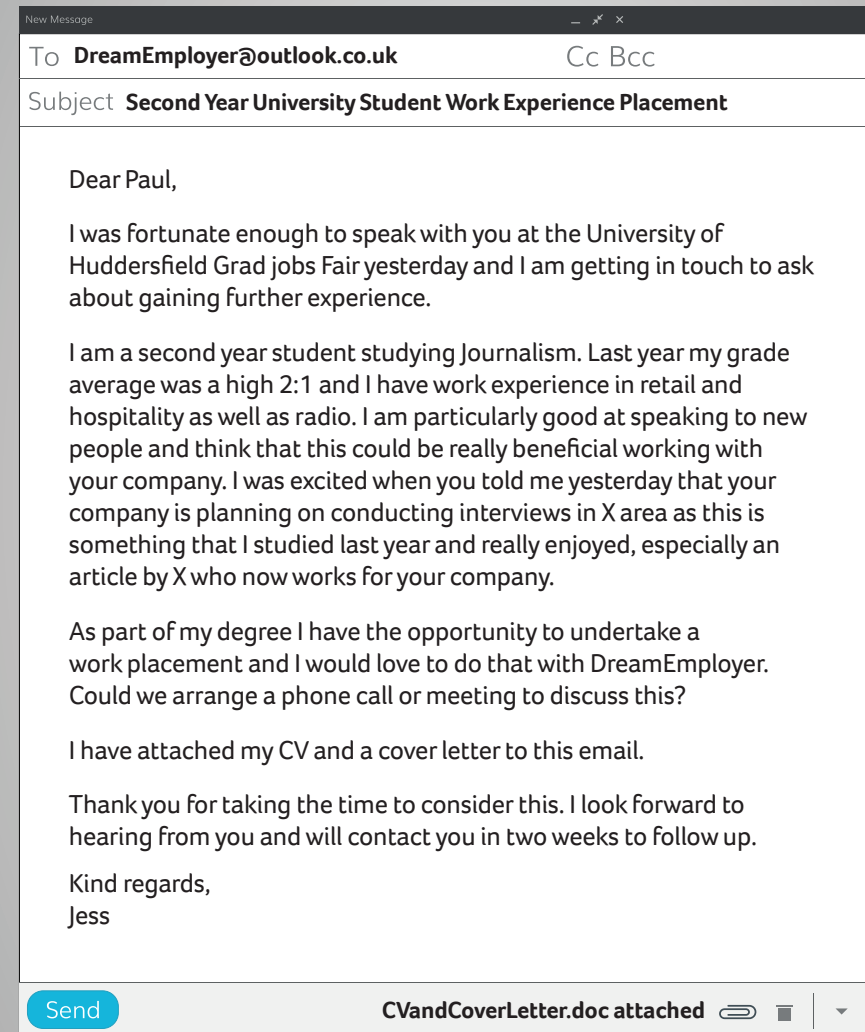
Once you have found the right person to contact, you would normally send through a cover letter and CV, tailored to the kind of work you want to do. If you need an idea of the kind of skills and experience you should highlight for a particular job, search the job profiles on [prospects.ac.uk](http://prospects.ac.uk), they always list what is required for common graduate jobs.

### ***What if I can't find a contact? Can I still get in touch?***

Of course! The best thing to do is call and ask to be put through to the right person to discuss working for the organisation. Be polite, remember people's names and have a good idea before you pick up the phone of what you are looking for and what you can offer. It is sensible to ask to arrange a meeting in person to discuss possibilities further.

### ***What if I have to email them?***

Sometimes you cannot speak to the right person over the phone or it is recommended that you email with a speculative enquiry. If this is the case, we recommend that you attach your CV and cover letter and send a short, focussed email to the employer along these lines:



The screenshot shows a 'New Message' window with the following details:

- To:** DreamEmployer@outlook.co.uk
- Cc Bcc:**
- Subject:** Second Year University Student Work Experience Placement

The body of the email contains the following text:

Dear Paul,

I was fortunate enough to speak with you at the University of Huddersfield Grad jobs Fair yesterday and I am getting in touch to ask about gaining further experience.

I am a second year student studying Journalism. Last year my grade average was a high 2:1 and I have work experience in retail and hospitality as well as radio. I am particularly good at speaking to new people and think that this could be really beneficial working with your company. I was excited when you told me yesterday that your company is planning on conducting interviews in X area as this is something that I studied last year and really enjoyed, especially an article by X who now works for your company.

As part of my degree I have the opportunity to undertake a work placement and I would love to do that with DreamEmployer. Could we arrange a phone call or meeting to discuss this?

I have attached my CV and a cover letter to this email.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this. I look forward to hearing from you and will contact you in two weeks to follow up.

Kind regards,  
Jess

At the bottom of the window, there is a 'Send' button and a notification that 'CVandCoverLetter.doc attached' with a paperclip icon.

## Step 5 Follow Up

Although securing work or experience may be one of your top priorities, it is likely that whoever you are communicating with at an organisation has a lot of other priorities at work above your potential time with them. Considering this, take the initiative and follow up on emails and phone calls. Normally one or two weeks after you have last contacted somebody is a fair amount of time before politely getting in touch to ask if anybody has had a chance to consider your request or if there has been any progress. If you don't, it can be easy for somebody to forget your application.

## Step 6 Optimism

Be optimistic and persistent. It is very rare that a person's very first speculative application is successful. It is likely that you will need to try a few different employers before you find something that works for you, but giving up near the start means that you definitely aren't likely to be successful.

## Remember we can help you!

Throughout your speculative job hunt we can help you to make the most of LinkedIn and give advice on CVs, cover letters and interviews. You can book your appointment at [careers.hud.ac.uk](https://careers.hud.ac.uk)

**This publication is also available online – should you like to have it in an alternative format please contact us.**

## Careers and Employability Service

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