

# How to get into business

Investigate routes into HR, sales, marketing, PR or consulting.

**T**he term 'business' is very broad, so here we're focusing on HR, sales, marketing, PR and management consulting. It's possible to get into these careers without taking a traditional degree, for example via a higher apprenticeship or sponsored degree (see page 10). Employers generally ask for two or three A levels (or equivalent). Some set minimum grades or UCAS points, typically between 200 and 300. Some programmes offer the chance to try different business areas via a series of placements: marketing, HR and sales are common options, though PR and management consulting placements are rare. For most other opportunities, and for most graduate schemes, applicants need to know which specific area interests them.

## HR

Sponsored degrees or higher apprenticeships are an option. Alternatively, some entry-level jobs are open to non-graduates, though office administration experience is often needed first.

A number of HR graduate schemes are open to those with any degree subject, though others ask for a relevant degree (eg business studies or psychology). In many cases applicants need a 2.1 (the second highest grade) though some employers accept a 2.2 (the third highest grade). Some organisations don't run formal graduate schemes but do have entry-level HR jobs that graduates can apply for.

## Sales

A number of sponsored degrees and higher apprenticeships offer the opportunity to work

in a sales role. There are also entry-level and trainee roles available, for example in media sales or recruitment. To get a job it will help if your child has customer service experience or can show that they have developed relevant skills (eg building relationships and understanding other people's needs) through extracurricular activities. Areas such as pharmaceutical or IT sales sometimes require a degree.

A number of graduate programmes are open to graduates from any degree discipline. IT companies may specify or prefer graduates with a degree in business or IT, and pharmaceutical companies often need graduates from a natural sciences, biomed, chemistry or life sciences background.

## Marketing

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available. You can also get an entry-level marketing job without a degree. To get hired for the latter, your child is likely to need experience in a business setting (eg an admin job) and potentially a qualification from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM). The CIM offers introductory courses and it's possible to study online and/or at evenings or weekends. Entry-level jobs in market research tend to be aimed at graduates, though your child could start in a support role and work their way up.

Many graduate roles (though not all) are open to those with any degree subject. If your child studies a subject that isn't related to business they should try to gain some relevant experience while at university.

## PR

A number of PR employers offer higher apprenticeships. To get onto one, your child will need evidence of their interest in the profession. For example, they could show their interest in current affairs by writing a blog, or that they are confident using social media by posting videos on a YouTube channel.

Employers for graduate roles usually require a 2.1 degree, but do not tend to specify a subject. However, if your child's degree relates to the work that an employer does, that could give an advantage: a science graduate may appeal to a PR organisation that specialises in healthcare communications, for example.

## Management consulting

Some firms, often referred to as professional services firms, offer a range of services to clients, such as accountancy, tax and consulting; others specialise in consulting services. At the time of writing, none of the latter offer opportunities for school leavers. However, professional services firms PwC and Deloitte offer school leaver programmes in consulting while KPMG includes an opportunity to experience consulting in its school leaver option called 360°, which gives a taste of several different divisions.

Graduates from any degree discipline can become consultants. A 2.1 is the minimum grade required by all employers. Intellectual ability is highly prized, so your child should study a subject they can get top grades in at the most prestigious university they can get into. **T**



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