

How do I increase my Employability while at college?

There are lots of things you can be doing while you're still at college to boost your chances of building a great career after you graduate! You might find some of the options a lot of fun, and they may even help you figure out exactly what you want to do in your future career.

Your college journey will last approx. three to five years so here are some ideas for developing your 'Whole Self' while in third level.

You can change a lot during this time, emerging from college as a confident, self-aware adult with many skills and qualities that can be used in the world of work.

1. Develop your skills

The following links give you useful and achievable ideas on how to develop Employability Skills.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/skillsdevelop.htm>

<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/>

<http://www.succeedatlife.co.uk/>

Tip: Now, find activities and opportunities to develop a range of the most sought after skills while at CIT!

2. Work hard and get good grades

It may sound obvious, but putting in lots of hard work while at CIT will pay off. Good grades are evidence of your commitment, work ethic and interest in your field of study. Achieving good grades gives you more employment and further study choices when you graduate. It also, of course, means that you are more knowledgeable and informed in your degree field.

3. Get organised and practice, and adopt new Time Management, Organisational and Study Skills

The following links give you useful tips for improving your time management, learning and study skills;

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/time-management.html>

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/learning-skills.html>

<http://www.studygs.net/> (The “Bible” of Study and Learning Help!)

Check out our Study & Learning Skills presentation on the ‘Students & FAQs’ section of www.mycit.ie/careers!

4. Think about what you want to do

Start by having a serious think about what kind of career you might want to work towards. It may seem very early to be thinking about how you want to use your degree but different careers benefit from different foundations, it will help you in the long-run if you’re able to start gaining experience that’s relevant to the particular career you want to pursue.

The links below will give you both information and inspiration!

www.icould.com

www.careersportal.ie

www.gradireland.com

www.brightknowledge.org

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/Choosing/choosingintro.htm>

<http://myfuture.edu.au/getting-started>

<http://myfuture.edu.au/explore-careers>

5. Write a CV early on

A CV is a record of your education, work experience, skills and achievements. It is also your personal Marketing Profile. It is never too early to create a CV! You may ask why you need one so early in your college career. The answer is; the process of compiling a CV helps you to be aware of what you have achieved so far in your life, and it also ensures you are ready to avail of any opportunity that may present itself to you.

It puts you in the best position to get part-time jobs, relevant work experience or a sought after internship.

The art of creating a really excellent CV takes practice. Get started early. Come to the lunchtime **CV & Advice Clinics** run by the CIT Careers Service and make sure to attend our CV talks.

Check out our CVs for Placement & Work Experience presentation on the 'Students & FAQs' section of www.mycit.ie/careers!

6. Secure work experience or a summer internship

Securing some work experience in your school holidays will help you figure out what you want to do for a career as well as providing experience that you can put on your CV. It's a good way of using your summer holiday productively, as it means that rather than drifting aimlessly during those long weeks you have away from school, you're working towards getting yourself on a rewarding career path.

Whether you spend a couple of weeks shadowing your parents in their jobs or get an internship on your local newspaper, the work experience you do now will be a valuable addition to your CV at this early stage in your journey to the world of work.

7. Get a part-time job

Working Part time is a great way of gaining experience in the world of business, providing you can strike the right balance between part-time work and study. All workplace experience has value.

You gain some important skills, such as customer service or sales meeting targets, working in teams, complying with required work and professional standards.

Whether you work in a café, petrol station or a farm, a part-time job of any kind will give you an introduction to working life that will not only provide the foundations for your first

step on the career ladder after college, but will also make employment seem less scary when you get your first full-time job.

8. Develop your communication and presentation skills

Debating is also a great way to learn more about what makes people tick, and to be exposed to a variety of interesting viewpoints.

Being able to communicate articulately and persuade others to your point of view is very useful in business, and it's a skill you can develop by joining a debating society while you're at school and university. There are even debating competitions between schools that you can take part in, such as the World Schools Debating Championships, which will help you gain confidence in public speaking. This skill will also come in useful for things like presentations at school, university or the workplace. It's especially handy if you want to become a lawyer, as you'll get good at arguing your case in front of lots of people.

9. Get involved in student clubs and societies

Actively participating in student clubs and societies isn't just good fun; it's a way of making friends and building and demonstrating **valuable skills** such as **communication and teamwork, organisational and leadership** skills. These skills aren't evident from your academic qualifications, no matter how brilliant they are.

Most graduate employers and organisations favour graduates who have been involved in campus life through participation in clubs and societies. There's something there for everyone.

<http://societies.cit.ie/>

<http://www.cit.ie/studentlife/sportsandclubs/>

10. Make sure your digital footprint is squeaky clean

Ideally, don't put anything online you wouldn't want an employer to see. Your life is in public view through social media and digital platforms. One of the first things that many employers now do is conduct Google searches of job applicants so you need to make sure that a Google search of your name doesn't turn up anything that could harm your chances

of gaining employment. Also search your name on Google Images and make sure it doesn't throw up any nasty surprises; if it does, get the photos taken down.

At the same time as making a valuable contribution to the internet and building a reputation for yourself through blogging, the other side of the coin is ensuring that your online presence is squeaky clean.

Ensure your privacy settings on Facebook are set to 'Friends Only' and use the 'View profile as a member of the public' function on your profile to ensure that outsiders can only see the bare minimum of what's on your profile.

If you're on Twitter, go through your Twitter profile and ensure there aren't any tweets you wouldn't want an employer to see; unless you set your profile to private, everything you write could be seen by a potential employer.

11. Get networking

Start building a network of contacts now. Get yourself on LinkedIn and start joining groups relevant to areas of interest to you. CIT Careers Service organise many events during the year. Go to as many employer led talks and events, visit the Employability Fair early on in Semester 1.

Be open to opportunities to talk to people and let them know what you are studying. Let others know that you are open and interested in finding out about the world of work and are open to availing of opportunities to explore various future career options through work shadowing and company visits, etc...

Use all connections available to you through extended family, neighbours, local community and Volunteer contacts make yourself known.

Click [here](#) to download a useful Networking Guide from the University of Seattle!

12. Volunteer

Volunteering for a not for profit organisation is a great way of boosting your future employability at the same time as helping out a good cause. Depending on your degree area, you may be able to gain relevant experience and skills. Any volunteer work you do – whether on a regular basis or a one-off fundraising project – is very much something to include on your CV, as it demonstrates lots of transferrable skills that can be applied in a business context.

<http://www.volunteercork.ie>

<http://www.volunteer.ie>

<http://www.activelink.ie>

13. Travel

Travel helps make you more adaptable, resilient, resourceful and more attractive to employers. While it doesn't directly make you more employable, what travel does do is broaden the mind. It also gets you used to communicating with people from other cultures and boosts your confidence it also demonstrates that you're someone who's willing to take on new experiences and get out of your comfort zone. Consider spending at least one summer working abroad.

<https://www.j1online.ie>

<http://www.campusa.ie/faqs>

<https://www.seasonworkers.com/summerjobs/resorts/summerjobsineurope.aspx>

<http://movineurope.esn.org/summer-jobs>

<http://uktemps.co.uk/jobs>