

# SETTLING INTO A NEW WORKFORCE AS A GRADUATE

<b>BEFORE YOUR FIRST DAY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ON YOUR FIRST DAY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SOME TYPICAL EXPECTATIONS WHILST AT WORK</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>WHEN YOU SHOULD BE PAID FOR WORK</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>HARASSMENT AND BULLYING</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>HOW LONG DOES IT REALISTICALLY TAKE TO GET PROMOTED?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>COMING TO WORK IN THE UK</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>GET MORE HELP FROM MDX WORKS</b>	<b>6</b>

## CONGRATULATIONS ON GRADUATING!

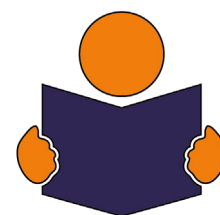
Starting a new job can feel quite daunting and having to adapt from a graduate into a professional job can take a bit of getting used to, but we're here to help.

This resource guide is designed to help you navigate your transition smoothly and make a successful start to your career as a new graduate. It will provide insights on making a good first impression and understanding when you should be paid for work.

### BEFORE YOUR FIRST DAY:

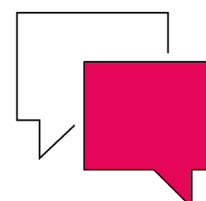
Check who you should report to on your first day

- This could be a line manager, supervisor or mentor.
- Make sure you have a way to get in touch with them e.g. phone number and email so you can let them know if you run into any problems.
- If you have any concerns or issues, such as running late, let the person who is responsible know as soon as possible.



### Understanding what your job role entails

- Check any information you've been given (e.g. job description or similar) to familiarise yourself with your main responsibilities, what time you should start.
- Ask questions about the company or person you will be working for to understand your role within the company a little better.
- Understand the company culture values and norms which can help in the long term to fit well in your role.



## ON YOUR FIRST DAY

### Admin

- There may be some admin stuff you may have to get through on your first day, so you may need to bring some official documents and ID. Check any information you've been given, for details of what you should bring.

### Time Management

- Be punctual; it's your responsibility to effectively plan your journey and mitigate any potential issues as it shows respect for others' time.
- Arrive a little early so that you are ready to start at the agreed time.

### Professional Ethics

- Dress appropriately for the job role you'll be doing; if you're not sure, just contact your manager before you start.
- Mirror the tone and writing style used by your colleagues when talking, writing emails, to understand the level of professionalism used within the company.

## SOME TYPICAL EXPECTATIONS WHILST AT WORK

Whilst working in your role it's important to make a good first impression to ensure you succeed in your new job.

### Introduce yourself to the people around you

- Showing genuine interest in your colleague's work can help build rapport and a lasting impression.
- Don't be shy, but exercise some good judgement, like not interrupting people who are very busy or bothering visitors or clients if it's not appropriate to do so.
- Building a strong professional network can be invaluable for future growth and opportunities, so make sure to communicate with people.



### Offer to help

- If you find you have nothing to do then ask: "is there anything I can do to help?"
- This is extremely important as it can help you learn more about the job and shows that you are interested and eager to do well in your role.
- Perhaps make suggestions about how you could help even if it's just making a cup of tea. Be proactive but don't move things or touch equipment unless you're sure it's ok to do so. If you're not sure, ask.



## Actively engaging

- Develop strong communication skills by actively listening (agreeing and nodding) in conversations to show your interest and commitment.
- Pay attention to instructions, ask clarifying questions, and take notes if necessary. If you're not sure how to do something, just ask (most managers would rather explain something twice than find out you've wasted the day trying to figure it out for yourself). On the other hand, if it's something you can learn by yourself by quickly looking it up on the internet or similar, then do that to save bothering other people.

## Continual Learning and Growth

- Seeking learning opportunities by staying updated with industry trends and advancements, attending training sessions, workshops, webinars and conferences relevant to your field can help keep your knowledge up to date (so you can compete effectively for jobs or promotion opportunities in the future). This could include skill-building workshops, mentoring programs, tuition assistance for further education.
- Embracing **constructive feedback** could also be useful for you to improve in your role.

## Work-life balance

- Try to maintain a healthy work-life balance by setting boundaries to help ensure that your job doesn't negatively impact on other aspects of your life, such as your mental-wellbeing.
- Perhaps creating clear patterns for when you are working and when you are not (people working from home may find this particularly important).
- **Indeed** have some great resources on how to set boundaries and why it matters.

Remember, settling into a new workplace takes time, so be patient with yourself. Seeking constructive feedback can help build your growth in your new role. Your enthusiasm, proactiveness, and commitment to personal and professional growth will contribute to a successful transition and a rewarding career as a new graduate.

Have a look at **SavetheStudent** for more details on what to expect in your first graduate job.





## WHEN YOU SHOULD BE PAID FOR WORK

### Minimum Wage

- Familiarise yourself with the **National Minimum Wage** which establishes the lowest hourly rate that employers must pay their employees.
- We would never recommend paying for work experience opportunities or vacancy-matching services. If you are struggling to find a suitable opportunity, get in touch with **MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk**



### Overtime Pay

- Overtime typically applies when you work more than your usual number of hours in a week.
- Look at **Gov.uk** for more information about your rights regarding overtime.

### Contractual Obligations

- Review your employment contract or agreement thoroughly to understand the terms of payment. Contracts may outline details such as salary and payment.
- **Gov.uk** has some useful advice on pay and work rights and support to make a complaint about your employer about your pay.

### Communication with HR or Payroll

- If you have any concerns or questions about your pay, you can reach out to your HR department or the payroll team, but if you feel you are being treated unfairly, you may wish to seek guidance and support from a union as they are independent of your company and therefore may give you more of an objective perspective.
- If you are unaware if your company has a Payroll team, contact your line manager.



### Job Scams

- Job scams come in lots of different forms but they most commonly involve scammers posting adverts or contacting people unexpectedly about unrealistic job opportunities in order to gain personal information and perhaps misuse your identity, or to charge you a fee for a non-existent service or to obtain and misuse your financial information.
- There are many ways you can protect yourself from employment fraud such as checking official records on companies' houses or overseas registries.
- Have a look at **Which** and **Getsafeonline** for more information on how to keep yourself safe.



## Trade Union

- Trade unions are organisations dedicated to protecting the interests of people in the workplace by maintaining and improving the conditions of the employees.
- By joining a trade union, you may benefit from the strength and security that comes to tackle issues and concerns within the workplace as well as perhaps receiving guidance with any issues you may have.
- Union membership often comes with certain obligations regarding strike action or similar and this may not suit everyone.
- It is perhaps best to research union membership options in your industry and choose to your own accord.
- Take a look at [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for more information on trade unions and how to join.

## HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Harassment is where someone creates an atmosphere that makes you feel uncomfortable, for example, this could be because you feel offended, intimidated or humiliated. If you're being bullied, your situation might also be harassment.

If a colleague is harassing you, try not to contact them directly causing an argument. Let your employer/HR know straight away. Having a witness or advocate present to observe or mediate any 'difficult' conversations could help with the situation.

Going through an official complaints' procedure, and perhaps involving HR or a Union could help your claim. Keeping notes in a format you can still access if you have to leave your job can also be useful.

Look at [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk) and the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for more in-depth details.



## HOW LONG DOES IT REALISTICALLY TAKE TO GET PROMOTED?

The time it takes to get promoted at work can vary a great deal depending on the role, the company structure, your experience, your ability to stand-out and so on. Though, there are things you can do that might help accelerate your promotion prospects such as keeping your skills up to date, networking and self-promotion (i.e. letting people know about your successes).



However, you may find that applying for roles outside your organisation might help you to reach more senior positions faster than staying where you are.

Have a look at this article on [Indeed](https://www.indeed.co.uk) as they discuss some effective strategies that could help increase your chances of getting a promotion.



## COMING TO WORK IN THE UK

It can be quite daunting to work in the UK if English is not your first language. However, here are some suggestions that may help.



If you're struggling, sometimes it can help to be open and honest with your line manager or colleagues about what you struggle with. You may find that they are very supportive and there may be simple things they could do (or stop doing) that might help you e.g. explaining jargon and moderating meeting, but not every environment is a supportive one, so decide for yourself if being open is the best approach.

Be confident that you have some really valuable intercultural skills, which might include: willingness to travel abroad for work, ability to understand different cultural contexts and viewpoints and eagerness to collaborate with people from different cultures.

Your intercultural skills are recognised as a real benefit by employers so your intercultural skills could be a unique selling point when showcasing your skills to potential employers!

### Some useful links:

- [Grammarly](#) (helps check your grammar)
- [DeepL translator](#) (results may be more natural sounding than those you get from Google Translate)
- [Communicating with confidence](#) (LinkedIn Learning)

## GET MORE HELP FROM MDX WORKS

Best of luck in your new role! Your dedication and commitment will undoubtedly contribute to your success in the workplace.

If you require any further employability support, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Drop in to the MDXworks Careers and Employability Centre (room CG07, College Building), or email: [MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk)

We can review your application documents, support with preparing for interviews, provide suggestions on where to look for work experience, and more.

### Access your careers and employability portal:

[MDXworks.com](https://www.mdxworks.com) where you'll find plenty of other resources and guides including our [graduate job-search guide](#), [CV template](#), [cover letter template](#), [interview guide](#), [job-search guide for disabled students](#).



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