

Typical University calendar and recruitment activity

Each university has a slightly different calendar and schedule of events. However, the more you can plan your recruitment timeline to suit the academic calendar (we know this isn't always possible), the more likely you are to be able to compete for the best graduate talent.

The most common error by SME employers timing-wise is to make first contact when the students have already left for the summer. Ideally, your offers would be made before Easter, although you typically can attract a strong range of applicants until the end of May. After that point, attraction becomes more difficult as students are no longer on campus or go home.

Whilst every recruiter timetable and University timetable is different, we hope this gives you an overview of the general ebb and flow of the academic calendar, student timelines and employer activity on campus:

Month	University graduate recruitment activity	SME graduate recruitment activity / options
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students start end Sep/early Oct Corporates open schemes for applications Company presentations and skill sessions start 	
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main autumn careers fairs and sector events Company presentations and skill sessions Intensive internal support provided to students to prepare them and support them with application processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider attending a careers fair, panel and sector events to build your brand on campus - accept CV's at the event, or interview good people on site, to start building a talent bank Send follow-ups to candidates of interest. Skip straight to interviews if you have a strong selection
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company presentations and skill sessions Students break up mid Dec Many corporate schemes close for applications, some early assessment centres may be underway 	
Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take exams at the start of the month. Corporates start next steps e.g. psychometric tests, video interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact universities to discuss your recruitment needs and support available Prepare job advert and secure sign-off
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill sessions on assessment centres and interviews University staff focus shifts from corporate graduate schemes to local, exclusive and SME opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise role with deadline for late February, set interview date in advance
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate assessment centres running Students break up for Easter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview candidates and make offers

Month	University graduate recruitment activity	SME graduate recruitment activity / options
Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporates make offers, more strong students enter the SME market having been rejected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still plenty of strong candidates available
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam periods • Final year undergraduates complete studies and leave University • Degree shows and summer careers fairs • Intensive support for graduates who have not secured roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Degree Shows (where students often showcase their final year work) and use as an opportunity to talent spot and proactively follow up with candidates of interest
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students start placements, graduate roles and/or return home • Summer careers fairs • Top up campaigns from corporates who still have vacancies • Intensive support for graduates who have not secured roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to become harder for universities to get in touch with students and attract applicants • Speak to universities about any activity to support graduates immediately job hunting after finals that you can access
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning starts for next years' recruitment cycle • Review meetings with key employers for last year/coming year • Top up campaigns from corporates who still have vacancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good month for graduates to start job hunting having had a break after university • Follow up with your university contacts to review process and seek involvement in next years' cycle
Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support still available but less activity, many staff and students on holiday 	
Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense preparation for the new academic year • Staff return and start planning activities • Post graduate and Masters students will frequently complete their studies at this point in the year and start actively job hunting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with your academic university contacts to seek involvement at course level

As always, the key is to work with your University contacts and partners to create your own activity plan that is right for your needs, budget, resource and timelines.