

**Imperial College
London**

**Careers Service
Annual Report
2020-21**



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1. Summary

Despite the pandemic that had a catastrophic global impact during the academic year of 2020 - 2021, The Careers Service offered a full and comprehensive service. New ways of remote engagement with students and other key stakeholders were piloted, implemented, and evaluated which enabled us to confidently enter the Autumn Term of 2020 with an offer that was robust, varied and fit for purpose for all users.

- During 2020-21 The Careers Service maintained our provision of personalised and one to one appointments for students, graduates, and postdocs. Using MS Teams our engagement and interactions were back to pre-pandemic levels with **4,691** individual careers related appointments carried out.
- During the academic year the Careers Service adapted all our employer engagement and event activity into online formats. We ran: 7 Careers Fairs including 1 China focused event; 4 sector-based forums; Twice weekly sector careers talks, and weekly employer led skills and business/case study sessions. The events recorded well over **18,500** bookings which was an increase on 2019–20.
- Discrete programmes and projects aimed at our Widening Participation cohort were carried out remotely during 2020-21. We adapted our work shadowing programme aimed at first year undergraduates with no or limited work experience. **268** students engaged with **127** employers during 2020-21, having an hour's online discussion to learn more about the sector and role they were interested in. The Careers Service also matched **160** students with a Careers Mentor during 2020-21. The Mentoring Programme facilitated by the Careers Service gives priority to students from our Widening Participation cohort.
- During 2020-21 we increased our offering of online centrally delivered careers intensives, essentials, labs, and discovery seminars. Our **"Developing Your Career During Covid-19"** sessions were extremely well attended. Sessions were tailored for undergraduates, postgraduates, and master's students. Further sessions were also developed and delivered regularly in response to the pandemic and included **"Making The Most Of Summer 2021"**, **"Job Hunting In A Recession"** and **"Creating Your Own Internship"** A programme of events were also developed for finalists and continuing students to prepare them for the difficult labour market that was created by the pandemic.
- During 2020-21 we continued to work with students as partners. We ran a series of student focus groups to review our online offer as well as engaging fully with liberation officers to curate events for our LGBT+, BAME and women's community. We also took advantage of the Student Shapers programme and had a student engaged for 6 weeks over the summer of 2021 reviewing and considering the impact of Covid for students with a report of recommendations.
- The Careers Service continued to contribute to the Imperial Horizons programme by delivering Professional Skills for Employability to 1st year students as part of the programme. The course in 2020-21 was delivered online in small groups of approximately 25 each. Delivering virtually enabled us to cater for students in different time zones and one class was run early in the morning to accommodate international students.

2. Staffing

Academic year 2020-21 was stable in terms of staffing and The Careers Service was at a full complement of staff for the first time in two years. The Careers Service also used income generated by employer activity to recruit freelance Careers Consultants over the autumn term to enable us to meet the surge in demand at this time. Due to the pandemic, we were not able to employ our PhD student CV and Cover Letter team and we hope to re-engage these valued members of our team for academic year 2022-23. The table below shows our current staffing

Table 1: The Careers Service Team 2020-21

Name	Role	Contact Details
Jason Yarrow	Director	j.yarrow@imperial.ac.uk
Rich Carruthers	Deputy Director	r.carruthers@imperial.ac.uk
Mark Allen	Careers Consultant	m.allen@imperial.ac.uk
Madelaine Chapman	Careers Consultant	m.chapman@imperial.ac.uk
Katie Dallison	Careers Consultant (L&T funded)	k.dallison@imperial.ac.uk
Victoria Sood	Careers Consultant	v.sood@imperial.ac.uk
Jess Popplewell	Careers Consultant (0.8 FTE)	j.popplewell@imperial.ac.uk
Becky Guppy	Careers Consultant	r.guppy@imperial.ac.uk
Robert Carpenter	Employer Liaison Manager	r.j.carpenter@imperial.ac.uk
Alex Ashbee	Careers Events & Marketing Assistant	a.ashbee@imperial.ac.uk
Maria Lounes	Administration Assistant (0.5 FTE)	m.lounes@imperial.ac.uk
Norma McEnery	Placement & Internship Adviser	n.mcenery@imperial.ac.uk
Rhiannon Whittaker	Placement & Internship Adviser	c.penny@imperial.ac.uk
Richard Marshall	Careers Information Manager	r.l.marshall@imperial.ac.uk
Steph Scantlebury	Information & Enquiries Officer	s.scantlebury@imperial.ac.uk
Sophie Hale	Information & Enquiries Officer	s.hale@imperial.ac.uk

3. Services for Current Students and Alumni

3.1. Individual work with students

Despite the global pandemic there continued to be high demand for one-to-one appointments and all available daily appointments in the autumn term were fully booked. A fair access policy is in place, limiting students to 3 appointments during autumn term. Using booking data from the previous year, a review of the timings and spread of appointments was undertaken to inform scheduling. This resulted in a larger spread of appointments over peak times and eased some of the pressure.

The introduction of My CVs an online CV checking service was a success and many students took advantage. Overall, **1,371** individual CVs were reviewed by the team (1567 in 2019-20), which eased pressure on our online appointments.

With additional freelancer capacity a total of **4,691** individual student interactions took place during 2020-21 (4027 in 2019-20). For those still unable to book an appointment in the peak period we continued to increase the level of self-help support on the website – and clear and direct links were added to online booking pages to direct students to the most relevant online sections of support.

Table 2 below provides details on individual consultations conducted by the team this year by student type. In total **6,062** one to one contacts and online checks were undertaken, an increase on the previous year.

Table 2: One to one Student appointments by type.						
	2020 - 21	2019- 20	2018-19	2017-18	2016 -15	2014-13
UG						
YEAR 1	658	625	285	250	310	274
YEAR 2	907	838	667	569	601	563
YEAR 3	1401	1322	1413	981	1421	1353
YEAR 4	575	625	901	444	971	945
YEAR 5	208	193	27	30	31	23
YEAR 6	19	26	4	9	5	18
PGT	1114	838	1145	900	1235	1249
PGR	657	702	748	486	712	658
Alumni	523	425	575	389	622	804
Total	6062*	5594*	5765*	4058	5908	5887

*Includes MYCV individual reviews

3.2. Centrally delivered Careers Service Events

During 2020-21 the Careers Service delivered a successful series of online events. Despite the restrictions that were imposed on us during lockdown we converted our employer activity to online formats which proved hugely popular. Over **200** companies attended our Careers Fairs during 2020-21 and more than **5,000** students attended the short company presentations that formed part of the fairs. Our events overall attracted **18,890** student bookings which was an increase on the previous year.

Sector Careers Fairs 2020-21

- Finance & Consulting
- Life & Health Sciences
- Engineering & Science
- IT & Technology
- Spring 2021
- Summer 2021
- China Careers Fair

Additionally, we ran events and networking forums focused on LGBT+, Women, BAME, Disability and Neuro diversity

Centrally delivered Careers Service workshops and seminars expanded in 2020-21 due to our move to an online offering. We now run four streams of workshops and seminars with refreshed topics and themes:

Career Intensives	Career Essentials	Career Labs	Career Discovery
25 minutes These presentations are fast-paced lasting approximately 30	50 minutes These seminars typically last 50 minutes and are designed to provide	90 minutes These workshops last approximately 80-90 minutes and are designed to be highly	50 minutes These seminars provide a starting point to explore occupational areas and have a focus on how to secure

minutes to provide starting points to help you understand the basics of the subject. Sessions cover topics such as CVs and Cover Letters.	you with the core knowledge and an understanding of the subject matter. Sessions cover the range of application stages, networking and how to make career choices at various points of your degree.	interactive. Throughout the session you will be expected to participate in various activities to help you understand and gain experience in the subject. Sessions cover the range of application stages, career decision making and transferable skills development including assertiveness and presentation skills.	and make the most of internships within the specific field. Our Placement & Internship Advisors will share their knowledge of the industry sectors and provide you with top tips about the relevant sector.
Career Consultants	Career Consultants	Career Consultants	Placement & Internship Advisors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVs • Cover Letters • Make the most of Careers Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Forms • Assessment Centres • CVs & Cover Letters • Career Planning 1st & 2nd Years • Career Planning for Finalists • Career Planning for Penultimate • Getting an Internship • Interviews • LinkedIn • Postgraduate Study • Psychometric Tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertiveness • Case Studies • Group Activities • Interviews • Presentations • To PhD or not to PhD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships in... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engineering ○ Pharma/Biotech ○ Environment ○ Banking & Finance ○ Government & Politics ○ Digital & Technology ○ Data Analytics ○ Science Communication • Create your own internship • Does size matter? SMEs • Value in Charity

Centrally delivered workshops and seminars have been offered daily throughout the year on various aspects of career planning and job search skills with **252** (184 in 2019-20) separate sessions taking place during 2020-21. This central programme, is open access to all students, complements sessions delivered within departments and addresses the needs of recent alumni. **6,638** (2133 in 2019-19) students attended the central seminar programme over the academic year.

3.3. Support for PhD students

The Careers Service provided support to the Graduate School through a series of Career Planning Workshops as part of their transferable skills programme. During 2020–21, there were **19** individual workshop sessions for PhD students designed and delivered by the team. The workshops scheduled during lockdown were adapted to a successful online format and went ahead as scheduled. **358** PhD students attended and feedback via The Graduate School was good. Topics covered included:

- Careers: An introduction to Career Planning for 1st Year PhDs
- Careers: Effective CVs and Applications
- Careers: Job Search with a Difference
- Careers: Preparing for Interviews
- Finish Up & Move On
- Presidents Scholars Workshop

The Careers Service also ran a suite of 8 Masterclasses for MSc students, with over **665** students in attendance. Topics covered included:

- Moving Forward: CVs, Cover Letters and Application Forms
- Moving Forward: Developing Your Career Through Networking
- Moving Forward: Interview Skills
- Masters to PhD

PhD and Masters' Students also make use of the Careers Service via our central appointments and we conducted **1771** individual one to one appointments for this group in 2020-21.

3.4. Support for Post-doctoral research staff

The Careers Service, on behalf of the Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre, adapted the previous in-person courses, creating a series of 2 hour workshops for postdocs and fellows designed to be delivered online. The titles were as follows:

- Planning a career change
- Making job applications
- Interviewing for academic jobs
- Interviewing for jobs outside academia

Each title was delivered twice between Jan and May 2021 on Microsoft Teams within Imperial. In addition the Careers Service was commissioned to deliver the two interviews workshops for KAUST in August and September.

Post-doctoral staff can also access the Careers Service staff for one-to-one appointments by prior arrangement with the Head of the PFDC as well as access our online resources and Jobslive system.

4. Imperial Horizons

Once again, the Careers Service contributed to the Imperial Horizons programme. The Professional Skills for Employability course was delivered online by the Careers Consultant team to 1st year Undergraduates in the autumn term and again in the spring term. This assessed course, delivered over 8 sessions includes Team Working & Group Dynamics; Communicating and Networking; Presenting with IMPACT; CVs, Cover Letters & Online Tests; Applications & Interviews and Planning for The Future.

5. Information Provision

5.1 IT systems

The IT system used by the Careers Service, JobsLive, has proved very successful again during 2020-21, holding a database of all company contacts, graduate, and internship opportunities as well as the careers events calendar and online booking system. Our fully online service utilised the system to enable our support to continue.

5.2 Website development

Overall student satisfaction with the website and online resources is high with 75% of students responding to the 2020-21 College Student Experience Survey stating that they definitely/mostly agreed that they were happy with Careers Service online resources.

New sections of the website were developed and updated regularly in response to the continued pandemic and the challenges that it posed both students and employers. We also used up to date links with our employers to inform students of the changing graduate labour market because of the national lockdown and highlighted this on our webpages. FAQs were created for students giving easily accessible and current information at a time of great stress for our community.

Covid-19 Careers Service FAQs

FAQs

[Expand all](#)

Job sector news and opportunities	+
Can I get careers support as a current student or graduate?	+
Internships, UROPs and Work Experience	+
My internship/ graduate job is not going ahead. What can I do?	+
Online tests, virtual assessment centres and video interviews	+
Developing employability skills and experience during COVID-19	+
Self-employment and freelance work	+
Lab and workshop skills	+
Look after yourself and take time to relax	+
Working from home effectively	+
Useful resources	+

During summer 2021 we undertook a review of content and navigation of our webpages utilising user feedback via Tree Jack surveys.

We continue to make our online resources technology-enabled to directly link and signpost students and alumni to the sections that were most relevant to them at their point of engagement with our resources. Content is tailored and targeted to meet student's expectations at key times of the recruitment cycle.

Student interview feedback is now live and accessible via a password-protected area of the Careers Service webpages and the next phase of information transformation will be digitising all our paper-based employer information and this will be moved to online by Spring 2022.

6. Work with employers and events

The Careers Service had a busy year in terms of employer engagement and reacted to the pandemic by converting all employer activity to an online format. We also partnered with The Bright Network and UPReach to assist students onto virtual internships as this area of traditional work experience for students was severely impacted by the pandemic with up to 30% less opportunity than in previous years

As we have moved to an online model of employer engagement there is concern that employers may become less likely to attend campus in the future and this is being noted throughout the sector. This will have serious implication for The Careers Service budget which relies on an element of income generation from our employer activity.

6.1 Careers Fairs

Academic year 2020-21 started with the annual China Careers Fair which was a full digital event. The Fair run-in collaboration with LSE and collaborating with the University of Cambridge, Columbia and Chicago and aims to connect Chinese students with employers in the region. The event was expanded in digital format to run from 10 – 21 August 2020 and attracted **22** employers recruiting in the region. **18** company presentations took place with **2571** Imperial students booked onto these. Sector based panels were also facilitated covering:

- Engineering
- Technology & Digital
- Consulting
- Banking & Finance

During the academic year a further 7 sector-based careers fairs and associated company presentations were ran. These attracted over **200** employers and student's engagement was high with **34,845** unique page views recorded for the programme of events covering:

- Finance & Consulting
- Engineering & Science
- IT & Technology
- Life Sciences
- Spring Fair 2021
- Summer Fair 2021

6.2 Forums

Due to Covid restrictions we could not offer any in person career networking events during 2020 -21. We did however maintain a full programme of Career Options In and panel sessions during the academic year. These events are sector or community specific and are a mix of presentations and Q&A. They remained popular with students and graduates. The Careers Service team ran 8 Forums and Panel Events covering career options and issues in:

- The Energy Industry
- The Consulting Industry
- The Science Sector
- The Manufacturing Sector
- LGBT+
- BAME
- Neurodiversity
- Career Options with a PhD

6.3 Employer-Led Skills Workshops

Online employer led skills workshops running throughout the autumn and spring terms continued to be popular with **413** students attending these interactive workshops. **11** sessions ran for Undergraduates and Master Students which included case studies and business games, as well as more traditional skills development sessions.

6.4 Getting into Careers Talk programme

The Tuesday and Thursday “Getting Into” careers talks attracted good numbers this year with over **2,666** students booking onto these sessions. Seventeen talks were programmed which aim to encourage students to develop an understanding of a wide variety of industry sectors and occupations. Many speakers are alumni of the College and collaboration with Alumni Relations has meant we can facilitate alumni to return to offer their insights to current students as they plan their careers. Topics covered in 2020-21 included:

- Getting into Engineering
- Getting into Software Engineering
- Getting into STEM Consulting
- Getting into Data Science & Analytics
- Getting into Medical Communications
- Getting into Life Sciences Beyond Academia

6.5 Employer presentations

During 2020-21, the Careers Service facilitated and marketed **40** company presentations to students. These events took place online and highlighted the opportunities that companies were carrying along with applicant and interview tips. Several of these presentations are closed to enable specific cohorts of students to attend. The College hosted presentations for female students, BAME, International students and those with a disability.

The Careers Service also marketed and communicated over **615** further Company Events to students during the academic year. These events take place on company online channels and the organisations arrange all sign up via their own platforms. The move to online meant many more students and alumni had access to our employer presentations and webinars

with **4,640** (1,505 in 2019-20) students booked to attend a company presentation or pitch during the academic year.

6.6 Vacancy handling

The Employer Liaison Manager and his team as well as our Information Officers have continued to encourage companies to make use of the free online vacancy system. Over **5,563** vacancies were processed during 2020-21 (5,800 in 2019-20). We saw an initial drop in vacancies as the pandemic took hold however by the of summer 2021, we were back at pre pandemic levels. Throughout the academic year we used our weekly newsletter to highlight the many opportunities that were available an effort to give realistic and encouraging highlights during what for many felt like very dark times.

7. Professional Project Fund

This initiative was introduced by our Placement & Internship Unit utilising funding previously allocated for our Charity Insights Programme. The Professional Project Fund sought to open out the appeal of Charity Insights and to give broader scope and autonomy for students to pursue areas of interest. Successful students, both Undergraduate and Postgraduate, apply for funding to support them to complete a four-week, graduate level project in the third sector. Bursaries of up to £1,200 are approved after applicants successfully pitch their ideas to a panel consisting of Career Service staff and external assessors.

In 2020 -21 nine bursaries were awarded, and projects were carried out remotely during summer 2021.

"After four weeks (of my project) I feel prepared for what I might face in a research career. This was an educating experience for me also in the sense that I appreciated the important role of charity in the progress and development of research." Year 4 Medical Biosciences with Management

8. Alumni Mentoring Programme

The Careers Service launched an Alumni Mentoring Scheme in October 2014. The aim of the Scheme is to enable alumni mentors to assist in the development of current students by encouraging their mentee to better understand the professional workplace, discuss potential careers open to them and share insights into their profession. Matching is based on degree background, academic department, and career interests. The motivation of the applicants is also measured, and priority is given to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups, in line with the College's outreach criteria and widening participation strategy. During academic year 2020-21, **160** students were paired with **70** alumni mentors. The relationships generally last for 10 months with a minimum of six contacts during that time. These contacts took place via technology enabled methods such as MS Teams and Zoom.

"It has been very beneficial being able to talk to someone with industry experience who has been through the experience of deciding what they want to do once they graduate from Imperial." Year 1 Computing

9. Work Shadowing

Our Work Shadowing programme which (based on good practice from the USA) is designed to give students short (1-5 day) insights into a professional workplace. The pandemic meant that we had to adapt the programme to an online format for 2020-21, enabling a one-hour online careers

related discussion to take place with an experienced professional. Our scheme targets first year undergraduates as it can be particularly difficult for them to secure work experience such as summer internships as preference is often given to those in more senior year groups. Additionally, we prioritised students from WP backgrounds and those with limited professional work experience. **268** first year students benefitted from talking to **127** employers as part of the abridged work shadowing programme we offered during the academic year. Organisations that took part included:

- Credit Suisse
- Bloomberg
- Scottish & Southern Power
- Precis Digital

“Personally, I have so much more faith in the industry I am thinking about entering. Originally, I was in 2 minds about whether to work in public vs private sector research due to a multitude of reasons, but my Work Shadowing host has cleared up some misconceptions and made me more confident that I can make an informed decision.” Year 1 Chemistry

10.SME Internship Scheme

During 2020-21 funds previously endowed by Santander Universities to run SME internships were not made available as these were diverted to projects and research related to vaccine development. The Careers Service however was able to use employer generated income to continue to offer students the opportunity to experience working in an SME with bursaries working on a matched funding model. The scheme provides SMEs with a means of engaging with the innovative graduate talent from Imperial College London, while meeting a business need and building their talent pipeline.

The Placement & Internship Unit within the Careers Service manage the scheme and offer a full recruitment service to SMEs and allocate internship funding. This support includes a draft of the initial job advert, upload onto our jobs board, promotion of the vacancy through our weekly newsletter, an initial shortlisting of applications, use of Careers Service Employer Room to conduct interviews, end-to-end guidance through interviews and ultimate selection. 15 students were able to take advantage of the scheme across 12 SMEs.

“I found that learning about the work environment of a start-up company is important, and how different skillsets can be used to work more efficiently on the tasks I was assigned, especially in limited time periods. My experience will definitely impact my future career decisions.” Year 6 Aeronautics Research PhD

11. Graduate Outcomes Survey

Students who graduated in 2017 were the last cohort to be captured by the six months out Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. This has been replaced by a new statutory **Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS)**. This now surveys Graduates fifteen months after they have completed their studies. It is a three-monthly rolling survey and is now outsourced to external contractors under the direction of HESA. The Guardian Good University Guide 2022 ranked Imperial College London Graduates as number one in securing graduate level employment 15 months after graduation.

The 2018-19 cohort of students – who left College in summer 2019 were surveyed in September 2020 at the height of the pandemic. The results from this were delayed and were eventually released by HESA as experimental data in July 2021.

Early analysis by Strategic Planning (**Table 1 below**) has shown that our graduates continue to have excellent and positive outcomes after leaving College.

Table 1

Metric	2018-19	2017-18	Change
Employment or further study	97%	97%	0%
Highly-skilled employment or further study	90%	89%	1%
Further study	18%	20%	-2%
Median salary (UK FT)	£35,000	£34,000	£1,000
Mean salary (UK FT)	£37,340	£36,560	£780

12. Careers Service: The Post Pandemic Future

The Careers Service team started a slow transition back to campus on 3rd August 2021. Initially opening our information desk and converting two interview rooms to enable the resumption of face-to-face student appointments. We are planning a three phased return increasing our presence on campus to be fully open for academic year 2021-22. We have learnt a lot over the past 18 months and despite the pandemic, have expanded much of our offer in an online format. Our online appointments are more accessible to all students and graduates than was previously the case. We are no longer constrained by the need to book rooms on campus for our workshops and seminars. This has massively increased our bookings and reach for our community. For us the future will be hybrid. Student feedback has been excellent and clear. A mix of online and in person is now the desired way of interacting, and we will adapt the service to meet these needs.

Finally, a huge amount of thanks to all The Careers Service team, who have worked and adapted admirably in what were dark times. We left campus together in March 2020 to develop a new and online way of working and supporting students as the pandemic took hold. We will return together to campus in readiness for academic year 2021-22. I certainly couldn't have done it alone.

Jason Yarrow

**Director
Careers Service**

14 September 2021

