



RECRUITMENT AGENCIES - ADVICE

What you can expect

You should not be asked for any kind of joining or registration fee. Agencies make their money by charging the client, not the candidate. Sometimes they may charge for additional services such as creating a CV for you or for other advice if this is part of their offering.

You will need to register with the agency (ies) of your choice, a process that usually involves filling in a paper or on-line application form or submitting your CV and often being interviewed or tested by the consultant. You will also be given an opportunity to express your preferences for careers, locations, and salary requirements.

Your details will be entered onto a database which is searched by the agency for relevant positions. If you are short-listed, you will be contacted and given details of the role and company and, if you agree, your CV will be forwarded for the client's consideration. This could lead to an interview or assessment centre and subsequently to a job offer.

Once you have an interview arranged you will be given relevant information about the company. It is quite usual for the client to be kept confidential until this stage.

Expect to receive feedback on your performance at any interviews. It is always worth asking for feedback as it should help you improve your technique.

Select the right type of agency

If you are looking for temporary work, any of the "high street" agencies will probably be able to offer some help, although look for those that specialise in treasury positions.

Check the agency can use someone with your level of experience. It will always be easier for them to place someone with a track record and evidence of competence; you can't blame them for not finding you a job, if you are not what their clients need! An agency could offer an effective way in because they have a good network of contacts.

Talk to different agencies/consultants and see who you feel comfortable with there are enough agencies around for you not to need to sign up with the first one you come across.

When weighing up whether an agency has anything to offer you, read their literature/website and ask lots of questions to find out if they are appropriate and reliable. Things to consider might include:

- Do their fields of specialism match your needs?
- Their history, including the length of time they have been in business (which might indicate their success).
- What volume of vacancies do they handle? Is this high or low in relation to the market they serve?
- What clients do you work with?
- Do you know anyone who has used them and can give feedback on the service?
- What is the current market like for jobs in your field?

As you would expect, agencies vary in effectiveness. Even the best cannot place every candidate; nor can you expect instant results.

Help your agency to help you

You may find it most effective to register with several agencies - either to maximise the number of potential employers or to cover several fields of work.

Build up a good working relationship with the consultant who is handling your applications. Be clear with them about what you are looking for and honest about what you can offer potential employers.

Keep your records up to date. If you develop a new skill or piece of knowledge, let your consultant(s) know so they can do the best job of selling you to recruiters. Update your consultant on other interviews etc

Try to be flexible, particularly if you are just looking for short-term work experience, as a good consultant will have a sound understanding of the job market and a realistic idea of what is available. Listen to advice if offered: specialist consultants might be able to tell you what additional skills, knowledge or experience you need to get into their area of recruitment.

With temping work, be reliable and professional, even though the postings are short term. An agency will not want to find you work if the way you behave damages their reputation with their clients.

A Word of Caution

Remember that there are good and bad agencies. The better agencies are the ones who offer you honest and consultative advice and additional services to help support you in your career.

Make sure that you keep track of which consultant sent you where and on what date

Tips to get the most out of your recruitment consultant

- Send an email and follow up with a call – always clearly reference which job you are interested in or which types of jobs, if you are not applying for a specific one
- Keep your CV format simple so that the company can integrate it into their systems easily. Ask for feedback on your CV and follow up on any suggestions to improve it
- Have a succinct pitch of what skills and ACHIEVEMENTS you have that are marketable and be clear on what types of role you want. However, also be willing to take advice as a good recruiter may suggest roles that you had not thought about and that could be ideal for you
- Try and establish a rapport with a consultant who will then be happy to vouch for your integrity and professionalism if any of their colleagues or clients are considering you for their roles
- Be aware of companies you have approached directly and ensure that no duplicate applications are made
- Be available – either via phone or email and respond promptly to any communications. This can sometimes be tricky if you are still employed, but let the agency know the best times to contact you and always be available then
- Do your research before any interviews that the agency arranges for you and deliver a professional interview. Make sure the agency provides you with a job specification, company literature and map/time of interview.
However, you must do research yourself on the company you are attending an interview with as you will only be given the basics
- Call the recruitment agency straight after any interviews to give feedback on how you view the opportunity
- Keep in contact if things change on your side – for example, you have an offer, or you have decided to change your search profile
- In summary, show that you value the service that your recruitment consultant is giving you and be a good ambassador for them whenever they introduce you to one of their

clients. If recruiters have doubts about how well you will perform in an interview, they will not introduce you to their client.

- If they do not know what is happening at your end it becomes difficult for them to do this. They will be working against you, not with you. Contact is everything in the recruitment process, on both sides.