



Careers & Development Guide

Aberdeen

Prepared by:
Outpost Aberdeen
1 Altens Farm Road
Aberdeen
AB12 3FY

Website: www.outpostuk.com
Email: Outpost-aberdeen@shell.com

Date: October 2007

These notes have been prepared for partners who wish to work, study or otherwise develop their skills or career while accompanying a Shell employee to Aberdeen. Some of the topics covered are complicated and laws are constantly changing. It is, therefore, not always possible to provide full and complete information. Where this is the case, websites and useful contacts are provided.

We are always keen to improve and develop this document and would be interested to hear from you if you have any other useful information or would like to see additional topics covered.

Please do not hesitate to contact Outpost Aberdeen on 01224 881237 or email us at: Outpost-aberdeen@shell.com for further assistance. We will be happy to discuss your particular needs and help in any way we can.

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1.0 Introduction to Aberdeen

Aberdeen City and Shire has recently been described as the second most competitive location in the UK in which to do business. The area is one of the most prosperous and flourishing regions in Scotland. Income levels are well above the UK average and the area has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the United Kingdom. Although most known for its reputation as the “oil capital of Europe”, there is a lot more to Aberdeen than the industries and services necessary to support oil production and exploration.

The City boasts two excellent universities and a college of further education. With a history going back over 500 years, Aberdeen University is one of the oldest in the UK and has produced three Nobel Prize winners. The first use of MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) was carried out by Aberdeen University scientists and other Aberdeen discoveries have been insulin and endorphins. Aberdeen also has a large teaching hospital with a separate brand new Children’s Hospital and further development due in the form of a new Dental Institute and a joint NHS/university educational centre. The NHS (National Health Service) Grampian employs over 16,000 healthcare workers. Aberdeen airport is the fastest growing BAA airport in Scotland with new services and routes being added all the time, whilst the UK’s largest transportation company, the First Group, is based in Aberdeen. Both the fishing industry (44% of Scotland’s fish landings occur here) and food processing and agriculture (the region accounts for around 27% of all food and drink exports from Scotland) are important sectors of the local economy. With stunning scenery and a rich cultural history the tourism industry is also booming in Aberdeen and the surrounding area.

With such a wide range of companies and industries in Aberdeen, clearly there are plenty of opportunities available for those who wish to work and indeed, providing you have a good command of English and remain flexible about the type of work you do, you have a good chance of finding employment in Aberdeen. In the sections below we have highlighted the key factors in finding employment in Aberdeen.

One of the beauties of living in Scotland is that the Scots have a love of life-long learning. That means that every step is taken to ensure that learning is accessible to all, regardless of age or financial standing. In Aberdeen, we are fortunate to have two excellent universities and a College of Higher Education all of which offer a wide range of vocational and non-vocational courses. Whatever your previous experiences of education, if you would like to continue or re-establish your studies in Aberdeen there will almost certainly be something to suit you. More information on the possibilities is set out in sections below.

2.0 Formalities

2.1 Work permits

Before you start to look for a job, you must check that you will be legally entitled to work in the UK. Immigration laws are always complicated and if you have any doubts you must seek advice from your partner's local HR advisor. As formalities often change you might also like to consult www.ukvisas.gov.uk to ascertain the current requirements on visas before you travel. Generally, if you are accompanying an expatriate employee here who has a work permit sponsored by their employing company, you and any dependents under the age of 18 are entitled to work here as well. If you look at the stamp on the entry clearance page of your passport as it was stamped when you entered the UK it should be stamped "Work permit Dependent" and then underneath this "No recourse to public funds". This means that you are able to work in the UK. If you are not entitled to work the words "No Work" will appear underneath this. This is a general rule and as ever there are always exceptions to every rule. For example, if you are not an EU citizen but your partner (the employee) is, he/she will not require a work permit to work here and there is therefore no work permit for you to be dependent on and you will not have the immediate right to work here.

2.2 National Insurance Numbers and Taxation

When you work in the UK you need to obtain a National Insurance (NI) number so that your employer can deduct National Insurance contributions and taxation from your earnings as they pay you (known as the PAYE system: Pay as You Earn). If you are looking for work or about to start a job you should visit the Job Centre Plus office at Ebury House, 13 Dee Street Aberdeen, 01224 – 802569 to obtain a signed letter entitled "Starting Work without an NI Number". You do not need to make an appointment to do this- simply turn up and ask for the letter. When you are applying for jobs or once you are told you may start work for an employer you give the employer a copy of this letter.

When you receive a written offer of employment or a letter from your new employer stating that you are now working for them, you can contact the Job Centre Plus office again to arrange an interview appointment to obtain a permanent NI number. Your interview appointment will be confirmed to you in writing and you will be told which original documents you should take with you to prove your identity and address, such as passport, birth and marriage certificates, driver's licence and bank statements. You must have the original documents: copies will not be accepted. You will be asked why you require a National Insurance number so you will need your formal job offer letter or letter from your employer confirming that you are working for them as mentioned above. At the interview you will be helped to complete the necessary application form. Once you have successfully completed the application process it takes about six weeks before you receive a permanent NI number which will be mailed to you. You should immediately

give your employer a note of your NI number, so that he or she can replace the temporary number.

If you are employed by someone rather than being self-employed, you are not required to register separately with the HM Revenue and Customs as this is done once your employer starts to deduct tax and NI contributions from your salary. However, if you receive income from any other sources or additional benefits from your company which are not taxed at source e.g. company car, then you must declare these on a Tax Declaration form. More information can be found about this on the HM Revenue and Customs website at www.hmrc.gov.uk

2.3 Employment contracts

You may be asked to sign a written contract of employment, although some companies do not provide a written contract for signature. All employees are entitled to receive, within 2 months of starting work, a written statement from their employer describing the main terms of the contract of employment. The written statement must include by law:

- Your name and that of your employer
- The date you started work
- The amount of pay and how often you will be paid, for example, weekly or monthly
- The hours of work
- Your holiday entitlement, including how many days off you are entitled to and what your holiday pay will be, if any
- How much warning (notice) you are entitled to if you are dismissed and how much warning you must give the employer if you want to leave the job
- The title of the job
- Where the job is based, for example, whether you will have to work in more than one location
- What the disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures are in the workplace
- What sick pay you are entitled to
- Whether you can join the employer's occupational pension scheme, if there is one.

This information can be given, in for example a staff hand book which all employees have access to. If you do not receive a contract or written statement within two weeks you should ask for one.

2.4 Foreign diploma evaluation and translation

Whilst your qualifications and skills may be well recognised in your home country it can sometimes be difficult to demonstrate this when you move locations. Whether your qualifications are written in English or in another language it may be difficult for your

employer to understand what they mean. To enable a prospective employer to compare your qualifications with UK qualifications you can apply to the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) www.naric.org.uk . To use the standard service, which takes around 10-15 working days for a fee of £40 plus VAT, or for online applications £34.00 plus VAT, you will receive a written assessment of your qualifications. You will need to have an official translation of your documents before you send them to these organisations unless your documents are written in French, Bulgarian, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Russian, Chinese, Romanian or Spanish in which case you can send them in their original language under the “Translation Waiver Scheme”. An additional fee of £30 is then payable for the translation. If the Translation Waiver Scheme does not apply to you then you will need to use a Translation Agency (there are several listed in the Yellow Pages). Ask for a quotation for how much it will cost to translate your documents and explain what you need it for. It may be more convenient and cheaper to have properly certified translations of any qualifications in less common languages completed in your base country.

2.5 English language

If English is not your native language any prospective employer or college/university admissions officer may be concerned that your proficiency in the English language is not adequate for the job or course for which you are applying. To demonstrate your proficiency you may wish to consider taking an IELTS test (International English Language Testing System) which will provide you with an internationally recognised certificate demonstrating your level of proficiency. To sit the test there is a fee of £95. You should apply for the test at least 6 weeks in advance. For further details on what the test involves, to see specimen tests and to find details of the next test dates and locations you can consult the IELTS website at www.ielts.org. There are test centers in both Glasgow and Edinburgh and in many countries worldwide so you could even sit the test before you leave your home country, if you have the time.

2.6 Formalities when working or volunteering with children or other vulnerable people

Should you desire to work or volunteer with children or other vulnerable or “at risk” populations, prospective employers or voluntary service agencies will ask you to provide a “Disclosure”. This is a certificate issued by Disclosure Scotland which either states that you have no history of criminal convictions, or it provides details of such. (Other reasons for seeking a Disclosure might include: positions involved in law administration; professional groups in health, pharmacy, and law; senior management positions in banking and/or financial services; or applications for firearms, explosives, or gaming licences.)

Employers and voluntary service agencies typically request a Disclosure from the candidate when a provisional offer of employment or a volunteer post is made. The

individual then applies to Disclosure Scotland for a Disclosure certificate. Check with your employer or voluntary service director to determine which type of Disclosure is required: Basic, Standard, or Enhanced. Depending on the type of Disclosure necessary, some employers or service agencies may be required to countersign your application, and may assist you with the application process. The fee for a Disclosure is GBP 20, but you are advised to check with your employer whether any additional fees may be required or indeed whether your employer will pay this fee on your behalf. Volunteers working in Scotland with children, young people or adults “at risk” should check with their directors about securing a “free” Disclosure. Only applicants who provide a current home address in the United Kingdom and have been a resident at this address for more than 12 months can apply on-line for a Basic Disclosure at: www.disclosurescotland.co.uk . If you have not resided at your current UK address for more than 12 months then you can apply using a paper application form.

A visit to the Disclosure Scotland website www.disclosurescotland.co.uk is strongly recommended as it provides detailed information about the application process and answers many “frequently asked questions” (FAQ’s). Applicants without computer access may seek further assistance through the Helpline (UK), . 0870-609-6006, or alternatively may write to: Disclosure Scotland, P.O. Box 250, Glasgow.

Individuals coming from OTHER countries who plan to take up UK residence and who desire to work with children or other “at risk” populations are well advised to plan ahead. Prior to moving to the UK, these individuals will want to request written “criminal record histories” from the country (or countries) in which they have recently resided during the last 5 years. (If even more than 5 years can be verified, so much the better!). A country’s local police force or data protection office may be a good place to start, although different offices in different countries may maintain criminal records. Obtaining such records ahead of time will enable relocated individuals to provide prospective employers or voluntary service agencies with photocopies of their criminal record history upon request. Non UK residents who have already relocated to the UK may find themselves required by employers to request criminal record histories from their previous countries of residence. It should be noted that “employer discretion” determines how many years’ worth of criminal record history is required for a particular employment (or volunteer) position - and this may vary significantly from employer to employer! Likewise, once employed in the UK a worker (or volunteer) may need to undergo periodic criminal record checks, and how often this occurs is also up to the discretion of the employing company or service agency.

2.7 Working in specialist fields

If you are qualified in a specialist field or profession which requires you to belong to a professional organisation and/or maintain certain accreditations and practicing certificates or licences you may be required to register with the appropriate professional organisation in the UK before you are allowed to work here in your field. You may have to demonstrate that any qualifications you have from overseas are equal to those which can

be obtained in the UK and you may have to undertake further tests or examinations. The details of the most common professional bodies are listed below.

We recommend checking on the requirements well in advance of your arrival in the UK if it is important to you to be able to work soon after your arrival as sometimes these procedures can take time or require documentation which it will be easier to find in your base country or in the country where you are currently working.

➤ **Doctors**

Before you can practice as a doctor in any capacity in the UK you must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC). Full details of how you can achieve this can be found on www.gmc-uk.org.

➤ **Anaesthetists**

To work as an anaesthetist in the UK, you must also be registered with the General Medical Council (see above). For more information on this profession please consult the website of The Royal College of Anaesthetists on www.rcoa.ac.uk.

➤ **Teachers**

To teach in Scotland you should be capable of registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. You should be aware that the education systems for England and Wales and Scotland are separately administered so if you are registered to teach in England and Wales, you will have to register again to teach in Scotland. The GTC website www.gtcs.org.uk gives full details of how to obtain registration.

➤ **Vets**

You must be registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to be able to practise as vet in the UK. Full details of how to obtain registration can be found on www.rcvs.org.uk.

➤ **Dentists**

To practice as a dentist in the UK, you must be registered with the General Dental Council. Full details of the regulation of dentistry in the UK can be found on www.gdc-uk.org. Additionally, most dentists are members of the British Dental Association. Consult www.bda.org.

➤ **Miscellaneous healthcare professionals**

If you are a healthcare professional wishing to work in one of the fields listed below in the UK then you MUST be registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC) before doing so. The website of the HPC www.hpc-uk.org gives full details and also links to the websites of the relevant professional bodies of each profession. The thirteen professions which HPC regulates are:

- Arts Therapists
- Biomedical Scientists
- Chiropodists/Podiatrists
- Clinical Scientists

- Dieticians
- Occupational Therapists
- Operating Department Practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Prosthetists and Orthotists
- Radiographers
- Speech and Language Therapists

➤ **Pharmacists**

In order to practice as a pharmacist in the UK, you must be registered with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. There are detailed procedures to be followed for this if you have qualified overseas and the relevant information can be found on the Society's website on www.rpsgb.org.

➤ **Nurses**

If you wish to work as a nurse or midwife whilst in the UK you must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. For more information consult www.nmc-uk.org.

➤ **Lawyers**

Those in the legal profession need to be aware that the legal system in Scotland is different to that in England and Wales. To practice as a solicitor, you must be a member of the law society in Scotland. Depending on where you qualified, this may involved taking further examinations in Scotland. Full details are available on www.lawscot.org. If you are a barrister you should consult www.advocates.org.uk.

➤ **Accountants**

If you are already a fully qualified accountant in your base country and/or you have been working in the accounting/financial area for some time, any prospective employer will consider your qualifications and experience and decide whether these are sufficient to enable you to take on the work proposed. Membership of a UK accounting body is not compulsory in those circumstances. However, if you wish to work in private practice, either on your own or in partnership with others, where you would need to be legally allowed to audit and sign off accounts then you MUST be registered with one of the following bodies:

- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales: www.icaew.co.uk
- Association of International Accountants: www.aia.org.uk
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants: www.acca.co.uk
- Association of Chartered Accountants of Scotland: www.icas.org.uk

3.0 Job search

There are several places in which to look for jobs:

3.1 Employment Agencies

There are a large number of employment agencies in Aberdeen, all listed in the Yellow Pages, which will have details of jobs available within the city. There are employment agencies which specialize in particular types of work e.g. secretarial, finance and accountancy and engineering jobs and you will need to invest some time in ringing and visiting a few before you find one which you feel best meets your needs and skills. You will need to have a CV available to take with you or send to them. If the agency feels that you are the type of candidate which they can place with one of their clients they will invite you for an interview before putting you in their database. The services of employment agencies are generally free to prospective employees; it is usually the employer who pays the agency when they have found a suitable candidate to fill a position. However, it has been known for agencies to take a percentage of your first year's salary, so please make sure on the first visit what the terms and conditions of being registered with them are. The agency may have temporary or permanent positions available. It is a good idea to ring the consultant you are dealing with at the agency every couple of weeks, just to remind him/her that you are still searching for jobs and to keep you fresh in his/her mind.

In the Appendices at the back of this guide there is a list of some of the agencies categorised by type, which was obtained from Careers Scotland. This list is not exhaustive, but highlights some of the better known agencies in each field.

3.2 Government job centres

Job Centre Plus is part of a network of public Employment Services that belong to EURES. Job Centre Plus is a government agency supporting people of working age from welfare into work and helping employers to fill their vacancies. Job Centre Plus can help you find full time or part time, temporary or permanent jobs. See their website at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

3.3 Newspapers

Newspapers advertise jobs on different days. Both The Scotsman and Herald have a job section on Fridays and The Sunday Times has a large section for executive jobs. The Financial Times has a separate job section on Thursdays for nationwide jobs in finance and banking. For local jobs one of the best sources is the daily paper The Press and Journal. On Fridays this paper includes a separate supplement called "Your Job" which not only contains many pages of job advertisements, but also interesting features on topics relevant to the local job market. It also contains notices of local Careers Fairs and dates of University Open Days. The Press and Journal is heavily used by the local health

service for advertising medical and nursing jobs, and by the local council for jobs in local government offices and all teaching and other jobs in local schools. Major oil companies also advertise their local vacancies in this supplement.

3.4 Websites

Some organisations advertise their jobs on their own websites. Some of the biggest locally include:

- www.aberdeencity.gov.uk (for a wide variety of jobs including teaching in the city centre)
- www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk (as above but outwith Aberdeen City eg Banchory, Stonehaven, Inverurie)
- www.jobs.nhsgrampian.org (all health/hospital related jobs)
- www.vsa.org.uk (some paid jobs within the Voluntary services sector)
- www.thisisnorthscotland.co.uk/jobs
- www.scottishjobstoday.co.uk
- www.sljobs.com
- www.monsterscotland.co.uk
- www.scotcareers.co.uk
- www.jobsinscotland.com
- www.theherald.co.uk/appointments
- www.retailjobsinscotland.com
- www.totaljobs.com/scotland
- www.reed.co.uk
- www.exec-appointments.com

3.5 Local networking

This is a great way of finding employment. Networking is not about “asking people you know for a job”, but about finding out what other people know and who they know. You also need to be comfortable with talking about yourself and what you can do to others in a way which is positive, but not “pushy”. If at first this sounds daunting, especially when you move to a new location, think about the circle of people you come into daily contact with. Start with the other parents waiting at the school gate or at playgroup or the new neighbours. Maybe you can join a local group or class where you will be able to engage others in conversation or agree to do some voluntary work where you will have the chance to integrate with the local community. If you don’t have a job, but do have a field of specialism such as the law, or teaching or accounting, see if you can attend the local events of your relevant professional body, such as lectures, social evenings and so on.

On a more practical level, keep your eyes on local noticeboards for opportunities such as giving music lessons, language tuition or babysitting. Noticeboards are often located in small local shops, some of the larger supermarkets or in the library.

3.6 Employment within Shell

A number of partners have found work with Shell. You can post your CV in the company website at: www.shell.com by going to “Jobs & Careers”. Outpost Aberdeen also keeps partners informed of job opportunities within the local offices that they are advised of. Make sure you ask to be on the partner database to receive these notifications.

3.7 Career Counselling

Whether you have left a previously well-established career to move to Aberdeen, spent some time away from work or study, to raise a family, or feel it’s time for a change of direction, there are sources of help at hand:

3.7.1 Careers Scotland

Located at 377 Union St, Aberdeen, tel: 01224 – 285200. Careers Scotland offers free vocational guidance to those of you who feel you would like to ‘reinvent yourself’ but are not quite sure how to go about it. They can advise on study opportunities or careers which suit individual needs and circumstances. If you wish to use this service please call them and ask to make an appointment to see an adult counsellor. They also have a helpful website at www.careers-scotland.org which details the services they offer, including an online “CV Builder”, on-line “self test” questionnaires and interview hints and tips.

3.7.2 University and College Careers Guidance.

If you are already a graduate you can use the University of Aberdeen Careers Service. You can contact them either by telephone (01224 – 273601) or email (careers@abdn.ac.uk). To see more on the services they offer look at www.abdn.ac.uk/careers.

3.7.3 Aberdeen College

The college offers advice to prospective students on study and career options. They can be contacted either by using the main College telephone number, 01224 – 612330 or via the website www.abcol.ac.uk selecting Student Services.

3.7.4 Outpost Aberdeen

At Outpost we offer one-to-one counselling on a confidential basis. We can help you write or re-write your CV, talk to you about your career aspirations and offer interview practice and general support as you try to find work in the area.

4.0 CVs and Applications

4.1 What is a CV?

CV is short for the Latin term "curriculum vitae" which means "the story of your life". Your CV is a marketing tool so should be used to sell you to a prospective employer and secure you the chance of getting a job interview so that you can sell your skills in person. There are many ways in which to draft a CV (Curriculum Vitae) and to start with it may help you to consult an on-line CV builder. We recommend the online CV builder on the Careers Scotland website, which prompts you for the information to build up your CV section by section. (See www.careers-scotland.org.uk).

You may wish to use your CV to apply for a job where the advertisement specifically asks for one, where the advertisement simply asks you to apply in writing, where you would send your CV with a letter of application, or where you are making a speculative application i.e. where you wish to find out if a particular company might be interested in employing you even though they have not advertised a specific job.

4.2 Hints and tips for a good CV

➤ **Pay attention to presentation:**

Your CV must be typed/printed on A4 good quality white paper and clearly laid out. If you are not good at typing and/or do not have access to a PC it is worth asking someone else to do this for you. Remember an employer may have to look at dozens of CVs- if yours is hard to read and looks messy he/she will move on to the next one.

➤ **Grammar and spelling:**

Make use of spell checker or a friend/colleague with an eye for detail to check that your spelling and grammar are perfect.

➤ **Length:**

Ideally a CV should be not much more than 2 sides of A4 paper. If it is too long and wordy and contains too much information it is hard for the employer to focus on the important information. He/she will get bored and move on to another CV which is shorter and easier to understand.

➤ **Chronological order:**

Although it is possible to build up a CV on a functional basis i.e. looking at particular skills rather than at a job history, most employers prefer to see a chronological career history. So you should list previous employment with your current position as the most recent and you should account for any gaps i.e. where you were overseas for a couple of years accompanying a partner on assignment.

➤ **Make it interesting:**

Your CV needs to grab the reader's attention and make him or her put your CV in the "Invite for interview" pile on his desk. To do this you need to demonstrate why your skills and experience are right for the job so you must focus on the skills you have used and developed in your previous experiences. For example, a poor CV would say "I worked in a cake shop, where I dealt with customers, put cakes on the shelves and counted the cash in the till". A better CV would say "I was responsible for creating the daily display of merchandise and was able to use my excellent interpersonal and communication skills to maximize sales. I was also given sole responsibility for cashing and banking daily takings and reconciling the till".

➤ **Cut out irrelevancies:**

A common mistake is to include too much detail on things which are no longer relevant i.e. once you have several years of career history behind you, you do not need to list every single academic qualification. It would be enough to say you left school with, for example, 9 GCSEs and 4 A levels and obtained a 2.1 degree in Law from Bristol University. Similarly, once you have been working for a few years, details of summer student jobs etc. are no longer relevant.

➤ **Referees:**

If you wish, you can include the names and contact details of your referees on the CV or simply state that they can be supplied on request, unless you have been asked to do otherwise. You must ask your referees for permission and it is a good idea to give them as much detail as possible about the job you have applied for so that they know how best to adapt what they want to say about you so that it is relevant to the job you have applied for. Some employers require a written reference, in which case if your referees are overseas you should provide an email or fax contact so that references can be obtained quickly. Other employers prefer to take up references verbally, in which case bear in mind that in view of time differences, you may need to provide both daytime and evening telephone numbers. You should also bear in mind that your referee should have a good command of English. **Please note, it is not acceptable in the UK to use a partner or relative as a referee.** Impartiality, which is very important in this country, cannot be guaranteed. Employers are also somewhat suspicious if you do not give your last employer as a referee. In these days of email, it is no longer difficult to communicate across the miles, so there is no excuse for not using referees in other countries.

4.3 Covering letter

Whether you are sending a CV in response to a job advertisement, forwarding an application form or sending in a speculative application, you must always also send a covering letter addressed to a named individual in the company. A job advertisement will usually give the name, but if you are sending in an unsolicited application, you should telephone the company and ascertain the name of the person in recruitment or who is in charge of the department in which you wish to work.

The covering letter gives you the opportunity to encourage the reader to consider your CV or application form and should make them want to know more about you. Your covering letter should be handwritten (many employers like to see your handwriting), neatly presented and with no spelling or grammar mistakes. If you make a mistake in writing it, you must write it out again rather than attempting to make corrections. It should be only one side of A4 paper and written in simple concise sentences. It should comprise three distinct sections:

➤ **Introduction- state the reason for your letter.**

If this is a speculative CV describe the type of work you are looking for. If responding to an advertisement state source of advertisement and date.

➤ **Content**

In this section you should explain specifically why you are interested in the job and summarise your strongest qualifications to do the job. You need to “sell yourself” to the employer.

➤ **Conclusion**

Refer the reader to your CV enclosed. State that you are interested in an interview, and if you are not currently working, it is worth mentioning that you are “immediately available” as this can be an advantage if the employer needs to fill the position very quickly.

5.0 Job interviews

If you are invited to attend an interview for a job, be aware that job interviews in the UK are usually formal. Even if you are attending an interview for a manual job, or a job where you will be given a uniform, you will be expected to be well groomed and in “formal clothing”. Gentlemen should wear at least a shirt and tie and ladies some smart clothing- either skirt or trouser suits are acceptable. You must be punctual so if you are not familiar with the location of the interview give yourself plenty of time to find it and if possible do a “test run” at a similar time of day to the interview so that you can see how much time it will take you to arrive and whether there are any problems with parking.

Do your homework before the interview. Take some time to find out about the company as this demonstrates your enthusiasm for the company and the prospect of working there and shows your resourcefulness. Use the internet to see if there have been any recent press coverage of the company such as opening a new office, developing a new product or new way of working. Remember to study any job description supplied and the CV which you forwarded as the interviewer will be basing his questions on what he already knows about you. Your CV may throw up some obvious questions- i.e. a series of quick job moves, a change of career direction, a period where you were not working, etc. Make sure you have prepared answers to these questions. The main reason for a job interview is for you to explain to the interviewer how your skills can be used to do the job which is on offer- so expect questions on how you think your skills fit the job description.

Here is a list of some possible questions taken from the Careers Scotland website which you should be confident about answering:

- Why have you applied for this job?
- What skills do you think are needed for this job?
- Why do you want to work for this company and what can you contribute to it?
- What do you know about this company?
- What was your greatest success?
- What has been your biggest failure? (Choose something which you were later able to correct)
- How would you describe yourself?
- What sort of manager are you?
- Are you willing to travel?
- What do you currently earn? (Be careful with this one- if you are looking to earn more in a new position you need to make it clear that your current salary is too low)

You will often be asked if you have any questions you would like to ask. It is difficult to think of these “on the spot” so it is a good idea to think of one or two in advance: it is acceptable to write them down and then refer to your notes if, in the heat of the interview, you forget what they were! You could ask questions about training and development opportunities, the chance to work overseas, the size of the department you will be working in. It is always a good idea to ask when and how you will be notified about the results of the interview.

If your application for a job is not successful, good business etiquette should dictate that you receive a letter from the company advising you that this is the case. Whilst this usually happens if you have reached the stage of an interview, some companies are neither efficient nor polite and you may not receive a written reply. Don't be afraid to telephone to follow up an application where you have received no reply after a reasonable length of time has elapsed. However, as a general rule, Scots are fairly modest people, who are often put off by what they perceive as pushy people. We can give you guidance about this in Outpost so don't be afraid to come and see us before you attend an interview. Partners who have come to see us prior to an interview have given us positive feedback. **Cultural difference matters when it comes to job applications and job interviews. It is important you have researched the Scottish way of doing things.**

6.0 Self-employment

If you have a particular skill which you feel you could sell to other people, you may want to try starting your own small business. Examples could include book-keeping or administrative services, computer tuition, language tuition, catering services, translation services, etc. There is plenty of help and support in the Aberdeen area for new and small business. The best of these is Business Gateway, tel. 0845 6096611, www.bgateway.com, which provides free help and support if you are thinking of setting up your own business. They run a free 'Introduction to Business' course. For more information contact The North East Enterprise Trust, Riverview Business Centre, Centurion Court, North Esplanade West, AB11 5QH, Tel: 01224-289700. Once you have completed that course you will be allocated a business adviser who will advise you on further courses to meet your needs, for example, marketing, taxation and bookkeeping courses.

7.0 Voluntary work

Why do voluntary work? There are many benefits to doing voluntary work. Sometimes it can lead to paid employment. It also provides opportunities to maintain and upgrade skills, develop a local social network, meet like-minded people, build up self-esteem and even improve your language skills. A survey carried out through Reed Executive showed that among 200 of the UK's leading businesses, 73% of employers would employ a candidate with volunteering experience over one without. 94% of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills.

There are plenty of opportunities for voluntary work in Aberdeen. There are many charitable organisations which are in need of help in many different areas, i.e. helping in charity shops, making tea for hospital visitors, driving patients to daycare centres, helping in an office or fundraising. The Yellow Pages lists many of these Charitable Organisations. Voluntary Service Aberdeen is one of the largest social care agencies in the UK. If you visit the office at 38 Castle Street there is vast array of informative literature on volunteer opportunities in Aberdeen. They also have a very informative web site at www.vsa.org.uk.

You will also find pleas for help in The Press and Journal and Evening Express, and if you live outside the city there is also the Deeside paper "Deeside Piper". Look out for notices in your local library or go along to charity coffee mornings, sales of work or jumble sales and ask to be introduced to one of the organisers.

8.0 Adult education

8.1 Vocational Training

There is a wide range of vocational courses (courses which lead to a professional qualification) on offer in Aberdeen. There are two universities in Aberdeen; The University of Aberdeen, 01224 – 273601, www.abdn.ac.uk and The Robert Gordon University, 01224 – 262000, www.rgu.ac.uk, both of which offer a wide variety of graduate and post-graduate diplomas and degree courses.

The website for each university gives full details of all courses and student services including contact names and numbers for each individual course. You can telephone and discuss further details of the courses. The academic year starts in September and runs through to May when examinations are usually held. For full degree courses, applications usually have to be made by December in the year preceding the year in which you wish to start your studies, so you will need to plan ahead. In the autumn, both universities hold Open Days for prospective students. Look out for advertisements in the local press or ring and ask for the respective dates. You will get the opportunity to meet a variety of staff and current students and to look around the university buildings.

Aberdeen College (General information line 01224 – 612330, www.abcol.ac.uk) runs a large number of courses leading to Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma awards. These courses are more demanding than the national qualifications obtained on leaving school (in Scotland these are called Standard Grades and Highers) but not as challenging as university degrees. The College also offers many courses leading to Scottish Vocational Qualifications which are undertaken in conjunction with working in such professions as car mechanics, hairdressing, beauty therapy and catering. The College also offers courses in the English language.

8.2 Distance Learning

If committing to a full time course is difficult due to family commitments or periods of absence from the UK, Aberdeen University offers opportunities to sign up for part time courses through its Key Learning Programme. Courses generally run in the evening and methods of study are very flexible involving use of the telephone and internet -sometimes even the exams can be taken online! Further information can be obtained from the website, by telephoning the university and asking for the Centre for Lifelong Learning or by emailing key@abdn.ac.uk.

Robert Gordon University also offers many courses via its “virtual campus”. These internet delivered courses allow you to study from your own home at times to suit you. Check their website for the list of courses currently available via this delivery method. You do require broadband internet access for this mode of study.

If you are interested in a wide variety of academic subjects and want to stretch your mind without the pain of examinations and essays, the University of Aberdeen's Open Lecture Programme may be of interest to you. For a yearly fee of £80 this programme offers the option of attending a wide variety of subject lectures alongside full time undergraduates. Under this programme you are not entitled to attend tutorials or have essays marked, but it may provide you with an idea of subjects which might interest you for further study or may stimulate some new areas of interest for you. For an additional fee of £15 per year you can obtain full University Library borrowing rights so that you will also be able to borrow books on the subjects covered by the lectures. For an application form and course programme contact the Centre for Life Long Learning on 01224 – 273528 or check www.abdn.ac.uk/lifelonglearning.

The UK also has an Open University, www.open.ac.uk, offering a wide variety of courses which can be taken individually, or as modules leading to full degree or diploma qualifications. Contact 0870 – 333 4340 for general enquiries, or 0131 – 226 3851 for The Open University in Scotland.

8.3 Studying non-vocational courses

There is a wide range of non-vocational courses (i.e. not leading to formal qualifications at diploma or degree level) offered in partnership between Aberdeen College and Aberdeen City or Aberdeenshire Council. These are held at locations in the Community all over the City centre, in the suburbs (such as Cults and Westhill) and further afield (such as Stonehaven and Banchory). To find out information on courses currently available in your area call 01224 – 497150 or contact Aberdeen College on 01224 – 612330. You can also contact your local community education centre (see contact numbers below). The Press and Journal newspaper carries a four-page pull-out in August listing all the courses available and the dates for registration. Courses are extremely wide ranging but cover arts (including crafts, painting, drawing and pottery), exercise and sport (including swimming, keep fit, badminton, indoor bowls, yoga and line dancing to highlight a few), languages (French, Spanish Italian at a variety of levels and English as a foreign language), computing (from complete beginners to desk top publishing and including at some centres the European Computer Driving Licence), and many other courses.

Some courses run in the evening and others during the day and usually for no more than 2 hours at a session. Typical costs would be around £50 for block of 10 sessions. Some centres also offer shorter courses i.e. at Christmas time there are often 2 or 3 session courses for making Christmas decorations or Christmas food. Some daytime centres do offer crèche facilities: you should check at the time of booking and book crèche facilities well in advance if they are available.

Some of the most popular Community Education Centres are:

- Rosemount Community Centre: 01224 – 647594
- Beechwood/Harlaw Academy: 01224 – 322576

- Cults Community Centre: 01224 – 493302
- Hazlehead: 01224 – 326430
- Kaimhill Community Centre: 01224 – 311996
- Summerhill Community Centre: 01224 – 346181
- Aberdeen Central Library: 01224 – 497157

You do not have to use the centre nearest your home - if you are prepared to travel you can go to any centre which has the courses in which you are interested.

8.4 Studying English as a foreign language

There are several opportunities for learning English as a foreign language. Aberdeen College runs a variety of part and full time courses, both during the day and in the evening. Many of these are very flexible as to time, if you need to work as well. More details of the latest programmes can be found at www.abcol.ac.uk. Courses can also be found at www.englishforeveryone.co.uk. At both of these colleges, there are courses at a variety of different levels and you will be allocated a group dependent on your ability. The University of Aberdeen is also able to provide a more personal one to one service. However, lessons are expensive, although one to one tuition would enable quicker progression to fluency. This may be worth the investment, if you are looking to be able to secure employment in the UK quickly. Outpost also holds a list of English language teachers who live in various parts of the city and surrounding area. Depending on the employment package of your partner, there may also be some company financial assistance for language tuition.

8.5 Arts and Crafts courses and hobbies

There are many opportunities for following art, craft and needlework activities in Aberdeen and the area. Your local community centre (check the number for your local one in the Yellow Pages under Community Centres) may run evening and/or daytime courses in Soft Furnishings and Needlecraft. Some of these may be run in association with Aberdeen College, 01224 – 612330, www.abcol.ac.uk.

Some contacts for arts and crafts courses and hobbies are:

- Anne Andrews, 01224 – 742030. Anne runs courses from her home in Westhill in a variety of crafts ranging from needlework/paper craft, etc. The programme changes regularly so it is best to ring her to find out exactly what she has coming up in the near future.
- Dorrie Doodle, 01224 – 648948, 44 Union Terrace, Aberdeen, AB10 1NP. This shop supplies all sorts of craft kits/supplies and runs a variety of courses in crafts such as stamping and card making. These are mostly paper-based crafts.
- The Stitcher's Patch, 01224 – 585878, The Green, Aberdeen, AB11 6NY. This shop has a good supply of needlework products and runs courses in related crafts.
- Canny Crafts, 01330 – 824979, 70 High St, Banchory, Kincardineshire AB31 5SS. Highly recommended retailer for sewing supplies. Particularly known for embroidery and patchwork. They also run courses. Check them out on the following website: www.planlocal.com/shopping/cannycrafts

9.0 Partner Development Programme (PDP)

With effect from 1 January 2008, the Partner Development Programme will replace the former Spouse Vocational Allowance. The PDP offers financial assistance to those on IBAS packages to help their Recognized Partner find a job, start a new career or maintain and transfer employment-related skills from one country to another, (whether relocating or repatriating).

9.1 Who can claim PDP?

An IBAS employee who has a Recognised Partner and who has selected the Accompanied basis may claim PDP for allowable costs incurred. The partner did not have to be in full time employment prior to the current assignment. Those on Unaccompanied status are not eligible to claim the PDP.

9.2 What can I claim?

Items, which are expected to have a positive impact on your employment prospects or ongoing mobility, are eligible for assistance. These include:

- Job search and career counselling
- Tertiary education and professional courses
- Business start-up advice
- Mandatory professional accreditation
- Intensive language tuition
- Evening classes that may lead to the start up of a home business

The list of allowable items has been expanded under the new scheme. For full details please refer to the International Mobility Website on the Shell Wide Web http://sww.shell.com/hr/internationalmobility/lta/living/lta_pdp.html. Please note this link will only work if you have access to the Shell Intranet.

9.3 What can I not claim?

Costs that are not reimbursed include computer hardware, communication links, books and software unless they are specifically required for a course. Travel costs to training establishments are not included, and accommodation costs will not be covered unless they are integral to the course (i.e. Summer School), and they must be limited to student type accommodation.

9.4 How do I make a claim?

The costs incurred should be claimed from the host company. You do not need to wait until a course has been completed, or qualification obtained. Payment will be made to the

Shell employee with whom the company has an employment relationship. You are advised to check your eligibility levels before you commit to any expenses. Reimbursement procedures are detailed on the International Mobility Website.

9.5 How do I check eligibility and reimbursement levels?

Full details of the policy and maximum levels of reimbursement can be obtained from the International Mobility Website. As at 1 January 2008, 80% of eligible and receipted costs will be reimbursed, up to the maximum of Euro 6,500 per expatriate assignment for the first four years of the assignment. An additional allowance is payable if you remain in the same location for more than four years, as long as you remain on IBAS terms.

10.0 Further reading

➤ **Curriculum Vitae:**

- T Jackson-The Perfect CV , Piatkus
- M Eggert Perfect CV, Random House
- P.McGee Writing a CV that works
- L Kogan Readymade CVs Kogan Page

➤ **Interviews:**

- MJ Yate Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions, Kogan Page
- M Eggert Perfect Answers to interview Questions, Random House

➤ **Career Counselling**

- J Monroe Brilliant Career Finder. Prentice Hall
- S Longson Changing your Career Kogan Page
- R.N Bolles What Colour is your Parachute, Ten Speed Press

➤ **Women Returning to work**

- Diana Dolfin and Suzanne Froeman, Back to Work, a guide for women returners, Robson Books

➤ **Flexible Careers**

- Career in your suitcase, Jo Parfitt
- Expat Entrepreneur,Jo Parfitt
- Find your Passion,Jo Parfitt
- Grow your own networks, Jo Parfitt

All of Jo Parfitt's books are available from Amazon on www.amazon.co.uk

Outpost Aberdeen is constantly updating its library and holds many career books. Call us for a complete list of our current holdings.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Appendix A: List of Employment Agencies in Aberdeen

11.1.1 Accounts and Finance

AAA (Aberdeen Appointments Agency) 461 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 211211
ASA International 60 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 652600
Bryant Personnel Services Ltd. 440 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 646238
Hay's Accountancy Personnel 36 Upperkirkgate, Aberdeen	01224 646238
Thorpe Malloy Recruitment Ltd 3 Queens' Terrace, Aberdeen	01224 658865

11.1.2 Administration, Business and Clerical

AAA (Aberdeen Appointments Agency) 461 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 211211
ASA (International) Ltd. Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 652600
Brook Street (UK) Ltd. 21 Crown Street, Aberdeen	01224 210004
Bryant Personnel Services Ltd. Bryant House, 440 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 646238
Carlton Resource Solutions Suite 2, 343 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 594893
Fircroft Recruitment 480 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 624300

Genesis Personnel 01224 357190
Merchants' House, 87 Waterloo Quay, Aberdeen

11.1.3 Nursing: Trained Nurses

Aberdeen Nursing Agency 01224 648567
35 Albert Street, Aberdeen

Raeburn Recruitment Ltd 01224 625050
220 Union Street, Aberdeen

11.1.4 Oil and Gas: Professional Specialists

Hazell Engineering Ltd 01224 630123
42 Union Terrace, Aberdeen

Prodrill Engineering 01224 643675
32 Carden Place, Aberdeen

PGS Production Services 01224 793400
Production House, Howemoss Drive, Kirkhill Industrial Estate, Dyce

11.1.5 Experienced Drilling Crew

C-Mar Group 01224 572832
Union Buildings, 15 Union Street, Aberdeen

MacGregor Energy 01224 845100
In-Spec House, Wellheads Drive, Dyce

Rigman Offshore Ltd 01224 725532
Unit 5a, Wellheads Crescent, Dyce

Team Recruitment 01224 561177
508 Union Street, Aberdeen

Tulloch Recruitment 01224 625097
508 Union Street, Aberdeen

11.1.6 Engineering and Technical

AAA (Aberdeen Appointments Agency) 461 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 211211
Bryant Personnel Services Ltd Bryant House, 440 Union Street	01224 646238
Fircroft Recruitment 480 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 624300
MacGregor Energy Services In-Spec House, Wellheads Drive, Dyce	01224 845100
Raeburn Recruitment Ltd 220 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 625050

11.1.7 Human Resources

AAA (Aberdeen Appointments Agency) 461 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 211211
Melville Craig Group 4 Golden Square, Aberdeen	01224 620262
The Urquhart Partnership 8 North Silver Street, Aberdeen	01224 643465
Bryant Personnel Services Ltd. Bryant House, 440 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 646238

11.1.8 IT: Professional Positions

Castle IT Services Ltd 231a Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 595595
GT Systems Alba House, 218 Union Street, Aberdeen	01224 620200
IT Parade 7 Queen's Gardens Aberdeen	01224 619202

SAIC UK Ltd 01224 841400
Campus 2, Balgownie Road, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen

11.1.9 IT: General Positions

Bryant Personnel Services Ltd 01224 646238
Bryant House, 440 Union Street, Aberdeen

LA Recruitment 01224 212929
173 Union Street, Aberdeen

Manpower UK Ltd. 01224 210320
Langstane House, 1-4 Dee Street, Aberdeen

Melville Craig Group 01224 620262
4 Golden Square, Aberdeen

Raeburn Recruitment Ltd 01224 625050
220 Union Street, Aberdeen

Reed Employment Services 01224 643235
122a Union Street, Aberdeen

Tulloch Recruitment 01224 625097
508 Union Street, Aberdeen

11.1.10 Catering

AT Personnel 01224 211877
8 St Mary's Place, Aberdeen

Kelly Services 01224 620910
105 George Street, Aberdeen

11.1.11 Construction Trades

AAA (Aberdeen Appointments Agency) 01224 211211
461 Union Street, Aberdeen

AT Personnel 01224 211877
8 St Mary's Place, Aberdeen

Carlton Resource Solutions
Suite 2, 343 Union Street, Aberdeen

01224 584293

Genesis (Peterhead)
2Marischal Street, Peterhead

01779 871980

LA Recruitment
173 Union Street, Aberdeen

01224 212929

Tulloch Recruitment
508 Union Street, Aberdeen

01224 625097