

Starting your career in **Russia** Country Guide for International Students



You chose to study in the United Kingdom. You are beginning to think about what your options are after graduation. Building on an excellent international education you are returning to your home country, Russia. You stand at the beginning of an exciting career, but what are the steps you need to take in order to find a suitable job, and where do you find the information you need?

This careers profile provides you with practical advice about returning to work in Russia to help you make a successful start in your career in the Russian labour market. Included are key facts about current trends and jobs in Russian industry, advice about seeking employment in Russia, hints and tips for making a successful application, and helpful information sources.

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Country profile

Since the 1990s, Russia has undergone a process of economic reform. The transfer from state-owned to privatised enterprises left a lot of organisations struggling to compete on the global market. The Russian government has since been striving to be admitted to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and will continue to do so. Today's Russian Federation has a free-market economy, which has shown continuous growth over the last ten years before the global economic crisis. A steadily developing service sector and a well-endowed oil and gas industry, next to an increased demand in domestic consumption, have contributed to that growth. Before the worldwide financial crisis took place, Russia experienced a very prosperous period. In the years leading up to the financial crisis, the economy grew about seven percent and the wages rose about 10-15%. The economic growth in recent years was stimulated by higher oil prices in 2008 and the foreign capital inflow into Russia, and dependence on these two economic forces means that the recent financial crisis is affecting the country severely. History has shown Russia's resilience in times of economic crisis, so experts expect its economy to improve when the worldwide crisis subsides.

KEY FACTS: The Russian economy

GDP real growth 2009:	-7.9%
GDP per capita 2009:	US\$15,100 (est.)
Labour force 2009:	75.81 million (est.)
Unemployment rate 2009:	8.4% (est.)
Major sectors of occupation:	Services (58.1%), Industry (31.6%), Agriculture (10.3%)
Main trading partners:	The Netherlands, Germany, Turkey, China, Italy, Belarus, Ukraine, Japan, Poland, United States.

Country profile

With growing liberalisation of the Russian market, unemployment has decreased while the average wage level has risen steadily. Today's post-Soviet society is characterised by an expanding middle class. Despite these developments, a noticeable gap between wealthy and poor continues to exist.

The majority of salaries in Russia not only depend on the respective sector of employment but also on regional conventions. Compared to other countries, Russia's interregional wage differences are large. For example, an employee in Moscow or St. Petersburg is likely to earn substantially more than an individual in Dagestan. Likewise a disparity exists between state and private sector wages.

KEY FACTS: The Russian graduate labour market

Average age at graduation:	22-24 years
Average graduate starting salaries:	US\$5,000(per annum, often with wide variation)
Average working week:	5 working days, approximately 40 hours
Holiday entitlement:	Typically 28 days annual leave, 9 national holidays.

In the years to come Russia will face demographic changes as result of the shrinking population, which will inevitably lead to a growing demand for skilled professionals.

Benefits

Benefits of a UK qualification

Possibly the largest benefit which all international students receive when studying at one of the over 100 universities in the UK, is the fact that UK universities have some of the most renowned and prestigious histories of higher education in the world. Even if a graduate does not study at one of the more famous institutions, the graduate can return to their home country safe in the knowledge that no matter where they look for work, their qualifications will be highly regarded. This is also useful in job interview situations, in which your study in the UK can come into conversation as a point of interest and as an example of experience in situations of teamwork, cultural awareness, when possibly you were outside of your comfort zone.

Furthermore, your experiences in writing and reading English are extremely valuable in the job market. As an added benefit, you will no doubt have been exposed to a variety of accents and dialects during your study stay, making you more open to the English language than you may have realised.

Graduating: Searching for work

Not long ago, student life and job finding was a far simpler procedure. Graduates would simply leave university, either looking for work through friends and family, a large company or a local business, and often step into a full-time job after an interview. These days, a wider variety of options exist which match the wider variety of jobs and the ease of travel which is available to the worldly student. As the number of students increases, so does the quality of the competition.

It's tough out there. Many graduates having just left university know this, whilst others are soon to find out. Since so many new university leavers have a career path in mind which they may have had for many years, the competition is fierce in many of the desirable graduate schemes. This is more the case in the UK than almost anywhere else. However, one benefit which you as an international student have is that you have a home country to which you can return. The lack of vacancies in the UK has led to many British students leaving for work further afield, often with little experience of the language in that country outside of the native English speaking countries. For example, in China whilst there are some international companies which accept English-only students, the vast majority will prefer a candidate with some basic Chinese. It can be difficult to come across vacancies in graduate jobs, full-time occupation is hard to find without experience and most find that internships can involve heavy competition. All is not lost however! Most graduates find that the main issue is simply knowing where to look, and this guide hopes to point you in the right direction.

Check out the '**More Information**' section to see handy links with tips and advice in the search for work.

Main routes to employment

Getting started

When searching the Internet for job offers and vacancies, it is advisable to bookmark webpages and re-visit them regularly. Make use of email alert services offered by online resources to stay updated with the newest jobs.

Online recruitment and vacancy websites:

- www.careercenter.ru
- www.e-graduate.ru
- www.findjob.ru/
- <http://hh.ru/>
- www.kellyservices.ru/web/ru/services/ru/pages/
- www.jobeasy.ru/
- www.jobinweb.ru/
- <http://joblist.ru/>
- www.job-today.ru/
- www.newjob.ru/
- www.rabota.ru/
- www.russiajobs.com
- www.russiajobsite.com
- www.sptimes.ru/
- www.superjob.ru/

Social networking

Social networking has become an increasingly common and important part of seeking work, especially with the social media generation. Sites such as Facebook.com and LinkedIn.com have flourished into everyday use for graduates and employers alike, in order to find the right person for the job. Graduates looking for work in their home nation may already be aware of the value of such sites, and may be aware of specific sites which are specialised in their own country. Graduates can place details of themselves including their job experience, education level, home/current university as well as a photo if preferred. On some of these sights they can also search for jobs according to their specific interest or area of study. What is clear is that graduates should certainly take the time to discover the potential job opportunities which these sites offer, both socially and at a socio-professional level.

The following list of examples is not exhaustive, and contains websites with varying emphasis on professionalism and social networking.

Main routes to employment

Popular in Russia

- www.liveJournal.com
- www.odnoklassniki.ru

Sites worth checking out (global):

- www.cmypitch.com
- www.ecademy.com
- www.efactor.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.Linkedin.com
- www.myspace.com
- www.plaxo.com
- www.spoke.com
- www.ryze.com
- www.ziggs.com

As a graduate looking for work in Russia, you should use a variety of strategies. Newspapers are a helpful starting point when it comes to the job-hunt. The Saturday editions usually contain large numbers of vacancies.

Key newspapers to look for:

- Kommersant www.kommersant.ru/
- Izvestia www.izvestia.ru/
- Moskovskiye Novosti www.mn.ru/
- Moskovskaya Pravda www.mospravda.ru/
- Nezavisimaya Gazeta www.ng.ru/
- Novaya Gazeta www.novayagazeta.ru/
- The Moscow Times www.themoscowtimes.com/index.php
- The St. Petersburg Times www.sptimes.ru/
- Vedomosti www.vedomosti.ru

Many vacancies are not advertised in the press. Therefore, the use of alternative sources, persistency and well developed detection skills will help you to discover the hidden jobs.

Main routes to employment

Graduate jobs/Careers Fairs

An interesting way of finding work or further education is through graduate fairs. With varying focuses in each event, graduates can find themselves coming face to face with companies of interest, and may even find interest in something which was not previously considered.

Graduate fairs are also a good opportunity to find out about graduate schemes being offered by companies and what these entail.

Many fairs offer other facilities such as CV workshops, letter writing tuition and a chance to network with individuals representing companies of differing sizes and reputations, thus they can offer a good learning opportunity even if you struggle to find a company suited to you.

Many universities in the UK hold their own fairs near the end of the spring/summer term and throughout the summer, so it is well worth getting involved and putting yourself out there. There may also be fairs in your home country, whether a national event or a university which is local to you, so keep your eyes and ears open.

When looking for a job, it is important to extend your network of contacts through social media and personal relations alike. Let not only your relatives but also friends, former professors and teachers, neighbours and other acquaintances know that you are searching for a job and tell them what kind of job or position you are looking for. Try to attend career fairs, and join professional networks to help you get in touch with valuable contacts.

You may find the following websites useful for locating fairs:

- www.begingroup.com/en/left/expo/Exhibitions - List of graduate fairs in Russia.
- www.educationusa.info/students-fairs.php?id=143 – A good list of organised fairs.
- www.eventogo.com/Russian-Federation/Others/Begin-Graduate-Education-Fair/event12036.html - A list of education fairs in Russia.

Alternative sources of information on jobs and companies:

- Open Russia www.openrussia.ru an online business directory
- Rus Market www.rusmarket.ru Russian online business portal

Recruitment agencies:

- www.ankor.ru
- www.kontakt.ru
- www.metropolis.ru

Main routes to employment

It is advisable to register with any employment agency up to one year before the date of your return to Russia. Applications for a specific role, however, should be sent no sooner than one month before your scheduled arrival back in Russia.

The right skills and competencies

Recruiting practices in Russia are changing with multinational organisations settling and investing in the Russian economy. While many executive posts were previously filled with staff hired abroad, domestic talent is gradually replacing more and more of these expatriates.

Most wanted:

- Enthusiasm.
- A working knowledge of a foreign language.
- An understanding of Western business structures and strategies.
- Strong analytical skills.
- Leadership qualities as well as the ability to work in a team.
- A high degree of flexibility and mobility.

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The application letter

The application letter should be typed and printed on good quality paper. Start with your name, address and telephone number in the top left corner. In the top right corner of the letter put the city and current date. Below this the name of the person your letter is addressed to, her/his job title and company name and address. The letter should be signed by you at the bottom.

The style of the letter should be formal without being too insistent. Do not merely repeat the information on your CV but try to comment on it. The letter should be short, approximately one or two pages long, professional and to the point.

It is useful to spend some time researching the company you are applying for in advance. More and more vacancies require a specific personal profile and particular skills. You should illustrate your skills with examples that fit the job description and the company culture.

Main routes to employment

The curriculum vitae (CV)

Like the application letter, your CV should be typed and printed. The document should include personal details, educational background, professional experience and personal interests. CVs designed for Russian employers need to be detailed with a clear layout, but nevertheless try to include all the information on one page. Generally it is not common to include references within or attached to your resume.

Russian employers expect a brief biography in full sentences – do not use a table format. Instead use separate headings for your personal details, education, practical experience, qualifications and hobbies/interests. Try to capture the interest of the person who will read your CV by showcasing your positive character and your professionalism. Instead of attempting to present yourself as an overly ideal candidate, try to portray your potential as a good colleague. Write the truth but don't mention your weaknesses. Describe your level of oral and written knowledge of languages. Employers also tend to look for computer literacy.

Some large multinational companies use their own application forms instead of personal CVs. You should pay attention to the open questions that try to establish your social and academic skills. Never leave blank spaces on an application form.

Digital applications

Digital application forms have become more common. The Internet is considered a fast medium of communication but completing an application form online requires the utmost attention – always check your submission before pressing send.

If you are making your application via email, write a concise application email with your CV attached. Applicants should always remember to use formal language when submitting an online application or applying via email.

Main routes to employment

The job interview

Job interviews are, as in many other countries, the most crucial part of the selection procedure in Russia. There are no set procedures regarding the number of interviews that will be held.

This depends largely on the sector, the type of company (local or international) and whether you know the employer already or not. In general, expect questions about your personal and professional goals for the near future and about your achievements in the past.

Preparing for the interview:

- Think in advance about questions that might be asked.
- Find out more the objectives of the position and the skills required.
- Research the organisation's background.
- Be clear about your skills, abilities, personal qualities and experience.
- Prepare your own questions to ask the employer.
- Make sure you arrive on time for the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the location it might be worthwhile checking it out in advance.

Where will your career take you?

Research from the i-graduate International Student Barometer study tells us the following about the main career drivers for Russian graduates:

Major career drivers for Russian graduates:

1. I want to develop myself.
2. Future job security is important to me.
3. I want to be recognised for my achievements.

©International Student Barometer Summer 2009

Top 3 future plans of Russian students about to graduate from UK HE Institutions:

1. Short term employment in the United Kingdom.
2. Migration and permanent residency.
2. Still undecided.
3. Further study at my institution.

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Competition is still a rather recent phenomenon within the Russian economy. It affects all sectors of Russian society and also influences the recruitment and selection process.

Companies are competing to recruit the best trained and most experienced personnel, causing recruiters to speak of an 'overheated' labour market in 2008, which is now slowly cooling down in reaction to the global recession.

Current career prospects

Currently, managerial executives in all sectors are highly sought after in Russia, as the Soviet-era created a lack of skillful managers. Because Russian society is becoming more consumer orientated, the proportion of the work force in the service sector will need to increase.

Western investors are particularly situated in Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as in the Ural region, where the heavy industry is located. Hence, most job opportunities for graduates can be found in these regions.

Where are the opportunities?

Banking and finance

The current global economic situation is causing most institutions to focus on core talent and to slow down their hiring. The large number of banking groups in Russia is expected to shrink, whilst the Russian ministry of finance has taken initiative to secure the sector financially.

Construction

The construction industry can be divided into three major segments: residential construction (house building), commercial and industrial real estate construction, and infrastructure building. During Soviet times there was large scale residential construction and as a consequence most people are now living in huge, aging, mass produced buildings. As a result, the construction sector has recently seen significant growth and forecasts are very optimistic for this sector. Construction of new office premises and business centers is also developing rapidly. In addition, Russia will host the 2014 Winter Olympics games and US\$10.74 billion is expected to be spent on infrastructure.

Energy

The Russian Federation is self-sufficient in fuel and power generation, whilst profiting hugely from exporting energy to neighbouring countries. The national energy mix is diverse, including fossil and nuclear energy. Research and implementation of renewable energy, however, is still comparatively underdeveloped. The industry's future challenge is to increase energy efficiency and to reduce negative effects on the environment.

Current career prospects

ICT

Boosted by competition and the focus of the government, ICT is a promising sector with an annual growth rate of 25%. Major modernisation programmes approved by the Russian government such as the concept of Satellite Communication Development, Cellular Mobile Communication development, Electronic Russia (eRussia) and the Development of the Common Education Information Space (eEducation) have created a wide range of job opportunities in the hardware, software and services market.

Manufacturing

Although growth in the manufacturing sector is occurring at a comparatively slow pace, opportunities are emerging in response to a need to replace outdated and uncompetitive equipment. Demand for passenger automobiles has increased substantially and opportunities in the automotive industry are forecast for the electric motors market.

Oil, gas and coal

Russia is the world's leading natural gas exporter. More than half of the national energy consumption is currently covered by the domestic gas production, while the export of gas, oil and coal contributes significantly to the country's GDP. Expansion of pipeline projects and increased production are among the future objectives of the industry. State-owned and privately owned companies in the Russian oil and gas sector traditionally offer jobs for professionals with comparatively high salaries.

Human resources

Careful selection and continuous training of staff is regarded as part of many companies' corporate strategy to increase efficiency and reduce costs. Growing internationalisation of Russian businesses and a high demand for skilled labour contribute to a challenging work environment for local HR professionals.

Current career prospects

Mining

Due to its wealth of metals and minerals, Russia has become one of the world's leading extractors and exporters. National and foreign investments have reinforced the sector's positive trend throughout the past few years, yet the industry has been hit by the global recession and will need some time to recover. Professionals with a background in geological sciences, engineering and safety management will find a challenging work environment, demanding the need for further technological innovation, whilst continuing to explore new mineral deposits. Manufacturers of mining equipment and tools will profit from the developments in this sector. Supply chain managers and logistic experts will also find job opportunities.

Research and Development

In recent years, growing numbers of university graduates have been put off by the prospect of working for government affiliated research institutions. Instead, private companies have grown to be increasingly more appealing than the military or the Russian Space Forces.

Where to find more information

General information

www.assay.ru/ Russian State Assaying (Probirnaya) Chamber of the Ministry of Finance of Russia

www.rupto.ru/ Russian Agency for Patents and Trademarks (Rospatent)

www.recep.ru/ Russian-European Centre for Economic policy (RECEP) Russia 117418 Moscow, Nahimovsky 47, Office 1706

www.informika.ru/ State Institute of Information Technologies and Telecommunications

rus.ruvr.ru/ The Voice of Russia (RUVR), Russia 115326, Moscow, st. Pyatnitskaya 25, bld. 1

Advice and tips on Careers Fairs, CVs and general job seeking

www.articlealley.com/article_1547972_36.html - An article for those in the nursing profession.

www.collegegrad.com/articles/dont-give-up.shtml - An article on staying positive throughout the work search process

www.employmentblawg.com/2010/job-seeking-tips-for-college-graduates - Further tips in the competitive field of employment seeking graduates

www.fpef.org/Education/Tips.htm - Some good tips on networking

www.thegraduate.co.uk/static_generic.cgi?a=tmg_jobboards – Link with good information for those still considering staying in the UK after study

www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/graduates_with_disability - A link providing useful tips and stats for graduates with a disability

www.londongradfair.co.uk/autumn - The Guardian's annual job fair for graduates. It is located in London.

www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article1277.html - Tips on how to work out your finances post-study.

www.online-graduate.co.uk/tipsforgrads.html - Further tips for graduates seeking work experience.

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international_students.htm - Information for international students

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Disclaimer

Whilst all efforts have been made to ensure the information in this Country Guide is correct at the time of writing, readers are advised that procedures and information sources may change regularly.

Appendix 1 : Sample CV

Youri Ivanov
88 Irkutsky prospekt, Apt. 58
Tomsk, Russia
Tel: +3822 111-285, E-mail: ivanov@freenet.ru

Experience:

- Head of International Collaboration Department (September 2007 to the present)
Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU), Tomsk, Russia
Coordinate international academic and research programs of the TPU
Coordinate and perform public relations, fund raising, development activities domestically and abroad
- Research Fellow (August 2002 to September 2006)
Tomsk Polytechnic University, Russia
Conducted research in the fields of Physics of Radiation
Published several scientific research articles

Achievements and activities included:

- Organized the Summer Study Student Tour from TPU to Michigan State University (2007)
- Organized a four-week training program in the UK for groups of TPU students (2008)
- Published a number of newspaper articles on international relations and cooperation, and the opportunities of application of Internet technology in higher education
- Participated in a number of international scientific conferences and seminars in Russia and abroad including the United Kingdom

Education:

- Ph.D. from the Institute of Hardness and Material Science
Russian Academy of Science, Tomsk, Russia
- M.Sc. Tomsk Polytechnic University in the field of physics, Tomsk, Russia
- B.Sc. from Tomsk Polytechnic University in the fields of engineering and physics, Tomsk, Russia

Special Skills:

Multilingual (Russian / Ukrainian / English / German)
Advanced ICT skills (Microsoft office / Dream waver / Adobe Acrobat Pro)

Fields of Interest:

Reading, music and theatre.