
After graduation do you want a job or to start a business?

The exams are finished, assignments are handed in, you've completed your degree, but what next? Hannah Kelly, from gradireland.com, looks at your career options.

A degree in most disciplines leaves a lot of doors open to you in a variety of different sectors. No matter what area of employment you're interested in, there is a lot of scope on your horizon, but, deciding what to do once you can be overwhelming. Knowing what your options are and what will suit you best is vital, including the advantages and disadvantages of each choice.

Starting your own business

Entrepreneurship is a very rewarding, if challenging, road for any graduate. If you have a well thought out idea for a business, and [a great business plan](#), you can draw on skills you have from your business and marketing degree to build a presence online with potential customers.

Networking is also essential when you're planning to get your idea off the ground. Think back to any people you have met during your time in university that may be able to help you.

“Successful home-grown startups are crucial for Ireland's sustained economic growth, and increasingly they are seen as a viable career path for business and marketing graduates, many of whom have gone on to successfully create and manage their companies,” says Dr Michael Gannon, senior lecturer in marketing at DCU.

Positives

- ? You'll learn a lot fast, and you will likely be doing something you like.
- ? You can draw on resources and supports and use your network to help you grow the business.

Negatives

- Long hours, lots of pressure and inconsistent pay are regular challenges for anyone starting a business.
- Financing is the biggest challenge for businesses at the start-up stage in particular. Do you have what it takes?

TAKE THE TEST: Do you have what it takes to start a business?

Further education

A postgraduate qualification is a benefit and sometimes required, in a variety of different sectors, including professional economics, finance, public sector and government, economic research, and consultancy.

If you're not sure what area you want to go into, think about choosing a more general postgraduate degree, but make sure you've thought about what you want to gain from it.

“Masters (MSc) programmes are typically followed immediately after successful completion of an

undergraduate degree,” Dr Gannon said, “The Masters of Business Administration (MBA) route, on the other hand, is more suited to the experienced professional with career ambitions focused on promotion or a new career direction”.

Positives

? Having a postgraduate degree can make it faster to climb the ladder when it comes to a job as you have more specific skills.

Negatives

? Postgraduate courses can be expensive and often work experience in the field is just as, if not more, valuable to employers.

READ MORE: [This is why companies hire interns.](#)

Working for a large company

A lot of multinational and large Irish companies run graduate programmes. They are highly structured, usually, and last around two years, with a focus on training and development.

“Graduate programmes are an attractive option for many high achieving graduates. These include IBEC's ‘Global Graduates’, Enterprise Ireland’s ‘Grad Hub’, as well as a range of firm-specific offers, including

those from Glanbia, Diageo, Bank of Ireland, Jameson, PwC, KPMG, EY, Deloitte, Morgan McKinley and P&G to name but a few,” says Gannon.

Positives

- ? A lot of support starting off your career.
- ? Opportunity to be recruited full-time by the company and to eventually progress to a leadership position within the company.

Negatives

- ? Competition can be fierce, finding a place can be challenging.
- ? In such a big company it can be difficult to take the initiative in developing your skills.

Travelling

A unique option for some graduates is to work part-time after completing their degree and save money to travel.

After three or four years working hard to finish a degree, some well-deserved time off can be a good option

for graduates and can give them the necessary time to think about their career paths.

Positives

? Travel can help equip you with valuable ‘soft-skills’ that employers look for including; time-management, organisational skills and adaptability.

Negatives

? Taking time out can mean you are out of sync with the work environment and recruitment cycle when you return.

DISCOVER: [What it's like to travel the world and work as a freelancer.](#)

Working for an SME

In Ireland, over 99 per cent of businesses in 2014 were small to medium enterprises with up to 250 employees, according to CSO data.

If you want to get a job with an SME, work on building your network, make personal contact with employers and develop useful insights about the sector that interests you. Do your research on the major SMEs in that area.

“For graduates seeking variety, early responsibility and the opportunity to work on their initiative, the SME route can be an attractive option,” says Gannon. "Some research suggests that promotion prospects and job

satisfaction are often higher within small companies."

Positives

- ? Roles can be less rigid which will allow you to develop skills across a range of functions.
- ? SMEs encourage creativity and entrepreneurship.

Negatives

- ? Roles in SMEs can be less structured and have a higher degree of uncertainty.
- ? Starting salaries can be lower compared to larger companies.

ARTS GRADUATES: [This is why companies value Arts graduates.](#)

[Gradireland.com](#) is Ireland's most comprehensive source of jobs and careers advice for graduates and students.