



Oxford Economy Sees Massive Jobs Growth

Oxfordshire has seen a massive growth in the number of jobs which is giving candidates more bargaining power, according to the team at Berry Recruitment's Oxford location. Firms have been investing more heavily in their workforce over the last year, new businesses are setting up and others are moving into the area.

Berry's Oxford team specialises in professional roles such as accountancy and finance, HR, sales and marketing, business development and PA/secretarial. It is constantly searching for quality candidates, which should be easy in such a graduate-rich place, but has become far more difficult over the last 12 months. The anecdotal evidence of Berry Recruitment supports official figures provided by the Office for National Statistics which show that less than one per cent of people in the county are claiming Job Seeker's Allowance – the lowest in the country.

In the city of Oxford the number of individuals claiming unemployment benefit rose from 1,600 in October 2008, to almost 3,000 by May 2009 as the recession kicked in. Four years later numbers had returned to pre-recession levels. And the trend appears to have continued as more jobs, both temporary and permanent, become available.

Zoe Ellis, manager of Berry's Oxford branch, said: "During the recession companies stayed where they were in terms of employment levels, but after a year's improvement in the economy they are taking on more staff. The jobs market has shifted from being in the companies' favour to being good for the candidates. Graduates and job-seekers are becoming more aware of their own worth meaning they won't just take the first opportunity that comes up, but will hunt around confident that better positions will emerge".

"Numerous university spin-out companies have set up and other businesses have relocated to Oxford and surrounding areas, especially in the bio-tech sector. We've also seen businesses that took their recruitment in-house come back to our consultancy because they can't find the right staff. While we are based in Oxford our reach goes into Reading, High Wycombe, Aylesbury and the surrounding areas and the picture is the same."

Further evidence of the boom in the jobs market comes from the number of spin-out companies which have recently formed. This year already six companies have been spun-out from the University of Oxford, and existing ones are growing.

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