

Dual career couples: Making it a reality

By Alessandra Gnudi, Executive Director, FOCUS



Dual career couples are nowadays the norm rather than the exception and we see that this trend is particularly strong among internationally mobile couples. While a relocation overseas may have an impact on spouses and partners' career continuity it is possible for them to land a job in line with their career goals.

One of the main challenges in a new country is to understand the local job market and become familiar with the style of the recruitment process. While this can be quite daunting whether seeking a career transition or continuing an established career, it is encouraging to know that in the UK there are job vacancies for people with international experience.

A move abroad can give partners the excuse they need to evaluate their career and the opportunity to reinvent themselves. Perhaps they have taken a career break to raise children, or have been in a location where they were not allowed to work and this could be the right time to get back into the job market. If professional qualifications cannot easily be transferred to the UK, it is recommended to look at what skill sets they could apply to the desirable role. There are plenty of possibilities to shift roles, do something new and work flexibly.

A key factor for a successful job search is having a wide network or even better several networks to call on for meeting people and learning of opportunities. Not only is it therefore essential for newcomers to invest time in meeting people, but it is also very important to be aware that the networking style in the UK may be very different to other countries and expats need to learn to navigate this new system. We always tell our members to never ignore or refuse an invitation, whether it is to have a drink in a pub or attend a local event, as this will provide the chance to meet new people.

In today's competitive and fast-paced market it is essential that a CV stands out and

spouses and partners looking for work should try to sell their international experience on top of their professional expertise and skills to prospective employers. Working with a professional career coach could be beneficial to have the right information for an impactful CV that will catch the eye of recruiters and employers and lead to an interview.

The whole interview process and relatively long time frame of a job search can also come as a surprise, as well as the salary range compared to other countries. We recommend that job seekers take the time to research their industry, to identify the local professional bodies and to understand the career progression in the UK, so that they have a foundation of local knowledge when they begin searching for a new job.

The job search process can be challenging and will require a lot of perseverance and energy, but if spouses and partners play by the British rules they will be successful. Bear in mind that you are more employable if you are already employed so take the first good opportunity that is offered to you even if it is not the ideal one. Moving on to the next job will be quicker and easier. Taking a volunteer position can also be useful in terms of getting UK experience and many times can lead to a paid position.

Keep meeting people, remain enthusiastic and remember that the UK has loads of job opportunities, many of which you have may not have heard of before!

FOCUS is a community for expats by expats. Operating as a non-profit, we are proud to have been providing an award winning support to our members for over 35 years.

Our **Career Development Programme (CDP)** for spouses and partners includes Career Workshops, One-to-One Coaching & Career Seminars and provides all the practical information needed to pursue a career in the UK. Join us for the free **[Introduction to FOCUS CDP](#)** on **Wednesday, 18th April**. For more information or to register please contact office@focus-info.org; www.focus-info.org