

Employment Seeking Strategies

Maybe you are looking to gain work experience, are making the transition from study to work or you are a mature age student making a career change from your current job. Either way the strategies suggested here will help you with your career planning and help develop your awareness of opportunities in the labour market.

You have developed research strategies as part of your studies. You now need to put these into practice to assist you to obtain employment. The following information should act both as a stimulus for action and a checklist to monitor your progress. This information is based on previous graduates' experience and the demands of the current labour market.

From past experience, graduates who have been successful in obtaining relevant employment have shown INITIATIVE, FLEXIBILITY and PERSISTENCE.



To assist you with career planning it is recommended that you access the **Planning Your Next Career Move** Blackboard site, under **Plan your career** in the **Course/career planning** section of the C&E website. For more information and help with employment seeking, select **Applications** and **Workshops & workbooks** under the **Getting a job** section of the C&E website.

Options and Considerations:

The type of employment sector, for example:

- government (local, state, national)
- private practice
- industry and commerce
- self employed

The size of the company or organisation:

- small
- national
- multi-national

Some of the factors you might want to consider are:

- location (local, state, national)
- salary (short term, long term)
- career progression opportunities
- full-time, part-time, casual, temporary

Examine your work values and how closely you need to try to match these. For example:

- challenging work
- security of tenure
- independence
- highly structured
- opportunities for creativity
- prestige

You may also wish to consider how you want to balance your work and life roles. For example, do you need time to follow your personal interests and pursuits outside work?

A major consideration is determining your capacity to be flexible in your search and apply lateral thinking strategies. With many other graduates seeking jobs in the traditional manner, you may need to be prepared to look more broadly.

General Strategies:

Establish a personal profile in which you should keep records of your:

- achievements
- references
- results
- examples of work, projects, initiatives

Develop a list of your:

- career goals – short and long term
- interest areas
- strengths and weaknesses
- personal qualities

Establish an Employment File in which you should begin to build up a record of your interest and activities specific to job hunting. This might contain lists of:

- useful personal contacts
- leads and contacts from other sources
- advertisements
- letters, resume, applications sent, company information
- employer responses by mail, phone or email

Establish a Folio of Work in which you keep examples of your work from university and any relevant material from voluntary, project or paid employment experiences. The **Student Portfolio** through QUT virtual is a great way to store this information.

Keep a Key Timelines folder in which you record key dates. For example, refer to the C&E website and other relevant sources for schedules and key dates.

Attend C&E workshops and use resources including the C&E website and the Career Planning website.

Seeking Declared Jobs

Listed below is a number of different ways you can access information about jobs which companies or organisations have declared as available or will be available in the near future.

Jobs While Studying

More than 1600 jobs while studying and more than 1900 graduate jobs are advertised through C&E each year. To apply, students respond directly to the individual employer as per the instructions provided on the advertisement. Useful websites for immediate job vacancies include:

- C&E website – **Job vacancies**
- mycareer, www.mycareer.com.au
- careerone, www.careerone.com.au
- Student Guild, www.guildonline.net
- Seek, www.seek.com.au

Graduate Recruitment

Each year more than 2000 companies & organisations use C&E to advertise and promote their graduate recruitment for the following year. These recruitment programs have application closing dates as early as March. The range of strategies they employ include:

- Emailing or direct mailing information to each student in targeted discipline/s.
- Participating in **the Careers Fairs** on campus (QUT's Fair is held annually in Semester One).
- Presenting 1-hour lunch or evening **Company Presentations**, profiling the company and recruitment processes.
- Advertising their program on the C&E website.



Select **Graduate programs** from the **Getting a Job** section of the C&E website.

Government Job Listing

All government job vacancies are now available online:

- Public Service Gazette – Commonwealth: www.psgazetteonline.gov.au
- Public Service Gazette (Jobs Online) – Queensland: www.jobs.qld.gov.au
- The Australian Local Government Job Directory: www.job-directory.com.au

Professional / Industry Associations and Publications

Many professional associations publish or advertise positions in regular newsletters or journals. The C&E website includes links to Professional and Industry Associations.



Select **Employer listing** under the **Getting a job** section of the C&E website.

Newspapers

The employment section of local, state and national newspapers is an obvious place to look. These advertisements are also accessible on the web at:

- mycareer, www.mycareer.com.au
- careerone, www.careerone.com.au

Ensure you research broadly including newspapers from other states. For examples, Sydney has three times the number of employers to Brisbane; therefore it would be advisable to scan Saturday's Sydney Morning Herald.

Internet

The Internet provides a wealth of resources and information including job vacancies, application details and useful contacts. Some useful starting points are:

- C&E website provides links to employer websites (**Employer listing** under **Getting a job**) and useful careers websites as well as advertising immediate job vacancies and graduate recruitment programs.
- www.graduatecareers.com.au and www.seek.com.au are Australian websites which includes graduate positions.
- A variety of recruitment agencies advertise both national and international positions on their websites.
- Other agencies ask you to log a resume or register on their site and they will send you relevant job vacancy lists.

Careers Fairs / Virtual Careers Fairs

Companies or organisations that have a similar recruiting time often combine and organise careers fairs in one venue. This is a good time to speak to a number of companies in one location and learn about their employment opportunities. QUT's Careers Fair is held each year in semester one and is a fantastic networking opportunity.

C&E also hosts Virtual Careers Fairs on the C&E website throughout the year. Go to www.vcf.graduatecareers.com.au. Virtual careers fairs are designed to provide up-to-date employment information at people's fingertips. Check the Careers and Employment website for more information and keep an eye out for other careers fairs such as the International Careers Fair and Education Careers Fair which are also held during the year.

Seeking Undeclared Jobs

A very large percentage of jobs are filled without advertising. Many of these are obtained through personal contacts, doing voluntary work, sending speculative letters and asking questions. Some useful suggestions for accessing these jobs are listed below.

Networking

Wherever you go, be alert to meeting people and introducing yourself as a person seeking employment later in the year. Try to use a friend or relative, neighbour, lecturer or former employer to get you an introduction or connection to the employer/s you want to target.

Try to get people inside the industry area to give you an idea of where and who to target as the most likely person to provide you with highly relevant information, further connection and/or employment.

Getting your foot in the door

In order to gain experience, skills, and make yourself more accessible, you could begin by doing voluntary work. That is, working part-time or working on specific projects (which may well be a part of your studies). If your voluntary work is relevant to your field of study, C&E can provide you with insurance for that time. Another strategy is to seek work in a non-graduate position and utilise the opportunity to get access to a 'graduate position' in that, or another, organisation.

Being flexible and Creative

Use your final year to explore unusual or alternative options other than your original choice/s. By focusing on your personal transferable skills, for example, you might speculate on a wide variety of jobs where these will be valued. This brainstorming, non-evaluating process may lead to the opening up of non-traditional or previously unthought-of options. Create your own job just for you by pushing boundaries and encouraging potential employers to take a risk with you.

Information Interviewing

It is important to find out from people inside the industry the latest trends and projected developments at both broad and job specific levels. Make contacts and prepare the type of questions you need to ask. Following up a letter with a phone call is one way to access good contacts. The Internet may provide you with some starting points.

Employment and Recruitment Agencies

There is a range of private agencies in the recruitment field. You can leave your resume with these agencies for consideration and inclusion in their database. Consult the newspapers or Yellow Pages for a list of these agencies. Some agencies utilise the Internet for advertising and receiving applications.

Additional Knowledge and Skills

In some instances by acquiring additional skills you may be able to enhance your chances of employment. These could include desktop publishing and computing skills, interpersonal skills, management skills, knowledge of accounting, and public speaking. These can be achieved by further graduate or post-graduate study, short courses, or participating in extra curricula activities.

Professional Associations/Institutions

By joining professional associations you can get access to their publications and contracts, meet professionals at association meetings, and take part in association-sponsored activities. Some professional associations have a special chapter for student memberships.

Cold Canvassing

Many jobs are not advertised formally and positions can be created and filled informally. In order to find out where these possible jobs are, and if you can be considered for them, you need to contact companies and organisations to find out. In many instances this requires you to develop a list of targeted possibilities and send them a copy of your resume together with a letter of request and introduction – called a speculative letter. It could be useful to send out a small number and follow each up with personal contact to ascertain your chances.

The Careers and Employment resources, newspapers, professional associations and the Internet are useful resources for obtaining lists of potential employers.

Listings of Potential Employers

Listed below are some of the sources available to help you begin to research and target potential employers.

Directories

The directories below are available for use at C&E – Level 2, U Block, Gardens Point. Other major libraries would also hold many of these publications.

- Book of Lists – a compilation of the top 25 companies across various industry areas.
- Graduate Opportunities – a university endorsed publication available at the Careers & Futures Fair and C&E.
- Graduate Outlook – commercial publication (often available for purchase at QUT bookshop).
- Newspapers.
- Unigrad and others.

Graduate Outcomes

QUT surveys past students, three months after the completion of their course. This data is available on the C&E website according to the course of study undertaken. The listings are extensive.



Select **Graduate Outcomes** under **Course/career planning** section of the C&E website.

Past Advertisements

Some professional institutes or organisations produce regular listings of jobs relevant to their professional area. Looking through their past advertisements can provide a list of companies which you may be interested in working for. Examples of these, held in the Careers and Employment office, include:

- The Hospital and Medical Employment Bulletin
- The Australian Local Government – Job Directory

Internet

There are numerous ways to get access to listings on the Internet:

- The **Employer listing** on the C&E website includes web links.
- Some Professional Association websites provide useful web links.



Select **Employer listing** under the **Getting a job** section of the C&E website

International Employers

Listed below are some of the sources available to help you begin to research and target potential international employers.

Internet

The Internet, in particular **Going Global**, is the best source for finding out about overseas employment.

Within the Going Global website you will find:

- *Country Guides* – all you need to know about finding work in another country
- *Employer Directory* – extensive list of major employers in many countries
- *Daily Job Postings* – some positions currently vacant overseas
- Chat groups are also available.



Select **Going Global** from the **Quicklinks** section of the C&E website.

You can also check newspapers on the Internet for information about overseas employment.

Career Resources

Some graduate employment books, for example, *Graduan (Malaysia)*, are available from Careers and Employment. Specific directories of employers can be borrowed from the International Career Counsellor.

Need more help?

Check out the C&E website for more information on:

- Work Experience Insurance
- Career Mentor Scheme
- Information Interviewing
- Obtaining Work
- Sourcing Contacts
- Cold Canvassing