



# Employment Seeking Strategies



Careers and  
Employment

Maybe you are making the transition from study to work or 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 graduate 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.

- For online versions of this guide and other information, visit **Job Seeking** in the **Getting a Job** section of the C&E website;  
<http://www.careers.qut.edu.au>
- C&E also have a **Career Planning website** which contains extensive information and examples to assist you;  
<https://olt.qut.edu.au/udf/careers/>

## Options and Considerations

- ★ Employment is available in a number of sectors. These include:
  - government (local, state, national)
  - private practice
  - industry and commerce
  - self employed
- ★ The size of the company or organisation can be:
  - 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
- ★ You may also want to 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. If you have access to it, use the Student Portfolio through QUT Virtual.
- ★ 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.

## Immediate Job Vacancies

Approximately 50 jobs per week are advertised through C&E. 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 – **Getting a job**
- ★ mycareer: <http://www.mycareer.com.au>
- ★ careerone: <http://www.careerone.com.au/>
- ★ Student Guild: <http://www.guildonline.net>

## Employers on Campus Program

Each year over 80 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:

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

## 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 and useful careers websites (**List of Employers** in the **Undergraduate** menu) as well as advertising immediate job vacancies and graduate recruitment programs.
- ★ **gradlink** and **SEEKcampus** are Australian databases of graduate positions. These sites can be accessed from the **Jobs** menu on the C&E website.
- ★ A variety of recruitment agencies advertise both national and international positions on their website, eg. <http://www.tmpworldwide.com>
- ★ Other agencies ask you to log a resume or register on their site and they will send you relevant job vacancy lists.

## 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, <http://www.mycareer.com.au/>
- ★ careerone, <http://www.careerone.com.au/>

Ensure you research broadly including newspapers from other states. For examples, Sydney has 3 times the number of employers to Brisbane; therefore it would be advisable to scan Saturday's Sydney Morning Herald.

## Public Service Gazettes and Other Directories

All government job vacancies are now available online:

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

## Careers Fairs / Virtual Careers Fairs

Companies or organisations that have a similar recruiting time often combine and organise a careers fair in one venue. QUT's Career & Futures Fair is held in Semester One each year.

The annual, nationwide Virtual Careers Fair is made available online at <http://www.vcf.gradlink.edu.au>

## QUT Student Guild

The Student Guild operates a website for students seeking part-time or casual work, <http://www.guildonline.net>

## 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 Association websites. Select **Job Seeking** in the **Getting a job** menu.

# 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 a 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). 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. See the **Connecting with Work Schemes** section of this handout.

## Employment and Recruitment Agencies

There are 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. See the chapter on Application Letter Writing for further details.

The C&E Careers Resources Centre's resources, newspapers, professional associations and the Internet are useful resources for obtaining lists of potential employers (see over).

# 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 from the C&E Office.
- ★ Graduate Outlook – commercial publication (often available for purchase at the QUT bookshop)
- ★ Newspapers

## Graduate Destination

QUT surveys past students three months after the completion of their course. This data is available on the C&E website (select **Graduate Outcomes** under **Course/career planning**) and is listed by the course of study undertaken. The listings are extensive.

## Past Advertisements

Some professional institutes or organisations produce regular listings of jobs relevant to their professional area. An example of these, held in the Careers Resource Centre, is:

- ★ Employment Opportunities – Australian Institute of Physics

## Internet

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

- ★ The **Job Seeking** section of the C&E website provides links to useful employment seeking sites.
- ★ Some Professional Association websites provide useful web links.

# International Employers

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

## Internet

The Internet is probably the best source of finding out about overseas employment. Visit **International** in the **Course/career planning** section on the C&E website.

## Directories

Some countries produce directories of employment opportunities for graduates. The C&E Career Resource Centre holds directories for Singapore, Malaysia and the UK.

The QLD State Library maintains databases of company details from around the world. This service is called **QBriz** and operates on a fee basis.

## Newspapers

C&E, QUT Library, and the State Library hold copies of newspapers from around the world.

## Connecting with Work

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

- ★ Work Experience
- ★ Career Mentor Scheme
- ★ International Work Placement Scheme
- ★ Information Interviewing
- ★ Obtaining Work
- ★ Sourcing Contacts
- ★ Cold Canvassing