

# Work Experience Success

Obtain some **relevant work experience while you study to get ahead in the graduate job market.**

Working on a paid or voluntary basis introduces you to the realities of the workforce, allows you to practise your skills and to get yourself known for all the right reasons.

## Step 1: Brainstorm where you want to gain experience – think outside the square!

Who do you know who could help you with industry information or work experience opportunities? **Information Interviewing** means talking to people in your industry to find out more about the **realities** of the role and industry you're considering. Build your professional network while you gain insight about possible career paths and ways to get your foot in the door. Be creative and flexible about where you could gain experience. E.g. you could do some voluntary PR work for your local soccer club, or design a website for your cousin's cafe.



## Step 2: Source a work experience opportunity

Follow up any possible avenues from **Step 1**. Check out the **Seeking Work Placement Opportunities Module** through QUT's Career Development Programs (first link below). Register for **QUT CareerHub** and check the job list for work experience opportunities – these may be advertised as part-time, casual, vacation or voluntary work, internships or work experience. Also check out job-seeking options like Seek, CareerOne or MyCareer.

Useful links: [www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop) [www.careerhub.qut.edu.au](http://www.careerhub.qut.edu.au)  
[www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au) [www.careerone.com.au](http://www.careerone.com.au) [www.mycareer.com.au](http://www.mycareer.com.au)

## Step 3: Prepare your resume and cover letter

Present the skills and experience that you can offer the employer concisely and professionally through your resume and cover letter, ensuring you target your documents for the particular organisation or job opportunity that you are applying for. QUT Careers and Employment offers **workshops**, Resume & Letters and Application for Work Placement **online modules**, and **feedback** on your documents via email. Check out the Careers and Employment links below for details.

Useful links: [www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/event/index.jsp](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/event/index.jsp)  
[www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop) [www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/resume.jsp](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/resume.jsp)

## Step 4: You've got an interview!

Feeling nervous? Don't worry, most people feel anxious in the lead up to an interview, but QUT Careers and Employment's services and resources can help you feel prepared and confident. Pick up an information sheet on interview skills, attend a workshop, complete the **Interviews for Work Placements** online module, and then set up a mock interview with one of our career counsellors. Check out the links below for more details.

Useful links: [www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/interview](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/interview)  
[www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/event/index.jsp](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/event/index.jsp) [www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop)

## Step 5: You've been offered work experience!

Congratulations! Now that you've successfully obtained a placement, start thinking about preparing for your first few days, making a good impression and establishing positive workplace relationships. For tips on managing your expectations and becoming workplace 'savvy' complete the **Thriving in the Workplace** online module.

Useful link: [www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop](http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/develop)

## Step 6: Build a professional network

Keep in touch with the industry contacts you've made, even after your work experience is finished. Maintaining your professional networks can help you stay up-to-date with industry developments and future employment – particularly unadvertised opportunities! Don't forget to add your latest work experience to your resume.

### Real-world student

*I volunteered 1 day a week for a local charity organisation, which helped me to narrow down the type of role I want to apply for when I graduate. Steph, PR student.*



# The Hidden Job Market - Accessing Unadvertised Jobs

## Networking

Actively engage in conversations with people you come in contact with on a day-to-day basis, introducing yourself as someone seeking employment. Look into websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to research organisations of interest and connect to the current word on the street about employment opportunities or developments. Don't forget about people you already know who may be able to assist with your job seeking process. Family, friends, lecturers, tutors, and colleagues or supervisors at current or past workplaces can all be useful contacts. Each of these people may help clarify your strengths, employment goals and strategies and may know other people who you could contact regarding information interviewing, work shadowing, or work experience.



## Professional Associations

Joining professional associations (for example a law society or local Chamber of Commerce) can be a good way to build your network and many of these groups publish or advertise positions in regular newsletters or journals. Attendance at association or industry events, conferences and seminars provides great opportunities to meet people working in your intended industry, and student memberships are often available at a discounted rate. Search the internet for relevant associations and upcoming events in your field.

## Cold Canvassing

Develop a list of potential organisations 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 a phone call or visit to ascertain your chances. Find out as much as you can about the organisation before you approach them, so you can show a genuine interest in their current projects and organisation values – and talk about the skills and knowledge **you** have to offer which will benefit their organisation.



### Real-world student

*I made contact with someone my uncle knew at a local community radio station and arranged to meet him for an information interview. I wanted to find out more about the industry and also ask for some voluntary work, so I dressed professionally as if I were going for an interview (which in a way I was!). I prepared questions for my contact about his career path and what his role involved, and as the conversation progressed, he asked me questions about my skills and career aspirations. He also invited me to read a community advertisement on the air, which was scary but exciting. He was impressed with my verbal communication skills and the areas I had studied in my course - and offered me some voluntary work involving a combination of some presenting, administration, researching and interviewing guests on the program. It's been a great way to get a foot into the door of the industry, and I'm in a better position to find out about other opportunities that might arise.* Chloe Baker

Individuals who have been successful in obtaining relevant employment have shown **INITIATIVE, FLEXIBILITY and PERSISTENCE**

## Employment and Recruitment Agencies

QUT CareerHub has a list of recruitment agencies under **Employment Services** at <https://careerhub.qut.edu.au/BrowseOrganisations.chpx>. Often you can submit your resume for consideration and inclusion in their database.

## Careers Fairs & Employer Presentations

Careers Fairs offer a great opportunity to speak to a number of companies in one location about their organisation and opportunities. QUT is involved in several careers fairs each year – check <http://www.careers.qut.edu.au/student/fair> for details. Employer Presentations, where organisations visit QUT for a student information session, are also an excellent way to gain information about job opportunities and possible career paths, and to speak with a potential employer – the schedule is available at <https://careerhub.qut.edu.au/BrowseEvents.chpx>. Employers often present in March and April to discuss applications and deadlines for Graduate Programs starting in the following year.