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Know your rights

AN ONLINE
GUIDE FOR
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS

**employable
you**

ieaa
International Education
Association of Australia



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Whether you're embarking on your first role, establishing your career or on the way to becoming your own boss, this interactive guide provides some essential tips and practical steps to help you on your employability journey.

Throughout this guide we navigate the issues you may face as an international student or graduate when looking for work opportunities or progressing your career aspirations.

This guide focuses on employment in Australia. While recruitment and employment processes differ considerably between countries, much of the advice presented here will be similarly useful for future work outside Australia.

Good luck! And remember, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

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what are **employers** looking for?

Employers are looking for a wide range of skills in potential recruits. These skills are developed not just in formal education and training, but also in on-the-job training, work experience and life experience outside of work.

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Employers are interested in learning about you as a whole person who has acquired a diverse set of skills over time.

Technical skills

Each job involves a set of technical skills, and these are usually listed clearly in online job advertisements. Some of these skills may be embedded in formal educational qualifications and specific to that occupation, such as accountancy or nursing skills. Other technical skills are more general and shared across related occupations, such as report writing or contract management. Technical skills are most often used in the recruitment process (resume and application stage) to identify potential candidates for interview.

Enterprise skills

Employers also look for enterprise skills to determine which of the qualified applicants is going to be the best fit for their organisation. These types of skills include engaging with others, learning and problem-solving and managing oneself, which are required in many roles and are transferable from one job to another. Employers will seek to learn about your enterprise skills during the interview process. Commonly demanded enterprise skills include:

- Communication skills
- Digital literacy
- Team work
- Professional integrity
- Creativity
- Customer service
- Time management
- Project management.



Read this report and find out what Australian employers are looking for.

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Communicating effectively is key

Research on international student employability has consistently pointed to the overwhelming importance of English language proficiency. While it is not surprising that this is the case in Australia, you shouldn't underestimate the importance of English proficiency in your career in your home country. One of the key advantages you have as an international student is having lived and studied for an extended period in an English-speaking environment. Employers will expect you to be able to work effectively in international and intercultural environments where a high level of English proficiency is key. Employers will expect you to:



WRITE CLEARLY & CONCISELY

Produce clear and concise written work such as emails, letters and reports. This is more than the ability to write in plain English. It is also the ability to produce written material that is appropriate for the task and easy to read. Grammar, tone and context are important.



LISTEN & CONTRIBUTE

Actively listen and confidently contribute to professional and social conversations in the workplace.

- Work related communication includes telephone and customer service skills, interaction with superiors and team members, speaking up about your ideas in meetings and participating in team activities.
- Social 'water cooler' conversations are informal workplace discussions with your colleagues about yourself and current events. Talking about the weather, sport, food, fashion, TV or music can help to build trust and rapport in team environments.



DISPLAY APPROPRIATE NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR

Display appropriate non-verbal behaviour such as body language, eye contact, posture, personal space and greetings.

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Creative thinking is essential for success

With the increasing use of automation in the workplace, many routine jobs are no longer needed. Employers are therefore increasingly seeking graduates with strong analytical and problem-solving skills that can't be replicated by a machine. They will be interested in whether you are able to identify and analyse challenges, independently gather information and propose solutions. This requires creative thinking, initiative and self-confidence.

Usually you will be working as part of a team, so it is important to be able to problem-solve together. This requires being able to listen to and learn from others, and to work collaboratively. Solving problems in your professional life also requires self-management and being able to handle difficult situations with resilience and perseverance.

Employers are looking for a person, not a cv

Employers will be most focused on your education and work experience to help identify the skills you bring to a role. But they will also be very interested in other activities you have been involved in, especially where they demonstrate additional skills they are looking for. Employers will be interested in any voluntary work you may have done, involvement in community projects or if you have participated in activities that involve coaching or mentoring others (e.g. sports). Adding these activities to your CV and talking about them in interviews will give employers a better idea of who you are, what you care about and what you can do.



Find out about creativity and the 'new work smarts' with this report from the Foundation for Young Australians.

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you & your capabilities

This stage of the journey is about understanding your value and becoming familiar with your knowledge, skills and behavioural traits so you can identify work opportunities that will be a good skills match and effectively market yourself to prospective employers.

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You cannot predict your future, but you can plan for your success and put yourself on a path towards fulfilling your dreams.

Preparing for employment

We live in a world of rapidly changing business and consumer needs, globalisation, technological advances and exciting new jobs of the future. Accordingly, the nature of work is changing along with the competencies and behavioural traits employees need to thrive in the modern workforce. But one thing for certain is that most people will have a range of different jobs and career paths throughout their working lives. In fact, the Foundation for Young Australians estimates that today's 15 year-olds can expect to have around 17 different employers over the course of five careers¹.

Along the way you will be continually learning new skills, through a combination of further education and training programs, on the job training, and work experience.

Your ongoing career development depends upon your ability to consciously build relevant, transferable skills, and develop your ability to communicate the value of these skills to prospective employers.

Identify goals and plan for your success

Research shows the earlier you begin to plan and build skills towards your career goals, the more employable you become. You cannot predict your future, but you can plan for your success and put yourself on a path toward fulfilling your dreams.

A great place to start is to map out your aspirations and career goals:

- Enlist the help of people who know you well to help you work out what you want and how you can achieve your career goals
- Make an appointment with a careers counsellor at your institution, attend career planning workshops and industry-specific career information sessions
- Start early and get your plan together early in your studies so you can make the most of the services and opportunities available at your institution to develop and finetune your skills.

¹ Foundation for Young Australians (2016), *The New Work Mindset*, <https://www.fya.org.au/report/the-new-work-mindset-report>

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Reflective activity

There are many tools available to help you think about what you really want from your future career. These tools can guide you through a process to help you to better understand your skills, interests and passions.

Some valuable questions to ask yourself include:

- What am I good at?
What do I dislike doing?
- What interests me?
What issues are important to me?
- What is my dream job? What is my dream workplace and why?

Here are three different tools, each of which will help you think through a different aspect of your career ambitions.

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Look for ways you can continually develop your English while in Australia, as this will give you a competitive edge when looking for work.

The most important strategy is to find opportunities to interact with other people. Research has shown that international students who engage in a broad range of activities outside of their own language group have a greater understanding of Australian culture and are better able to communicate effectively. Seek out different situations to practise your English listening, speaking and writing. This will enable you to gain confidence and help you feel comfortable communicating with all types of people in different contexts.

seven ways to improve your communication skills

- 1. Take short courses and workshops**
offered by your education provider to improve your pronunciation and writing skills.
- 2. Practise conversational English daily**
at home and out with your friends.
- 3. Immerse yourself in English media**
Read widely, listen to the radio, podcasts or audiobooks, watch films and TV.
- 4. Expand your network**
Join and participate in clubs and societies, and watch your confidence in social settings grow.
- 5. Work with a diverse range of people**
through a part-time job or on your next group assignment. Practising working with others in English is highly valuable, and you'll get to meet new people and develop a range of transferable skills.
- 6. Get to know some local slang**
Familiarise yourself with cultural norms. Watch other students communicate with their lecturers/teachers, friends and in public.
- 7. Be proactive**
If you are struggling with your studies or don't understand something, ask for help. Ask questions, speak to your lecturers and tutors or friends about your problems. Visit the academic support services team for advice on essay writing and look for a tutor or mentor to help you with problem areas.



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Gain industry experience early

Employers are looking for applicants who demonstrate their skills by talking about past experiences. So how can you develop your portfolio of relevant experience during your studies?

Different types of work experience can help you find your strengths, areas for development and the types of work you enjoy. However, it is worth being strategic about the types of work experience you select. Trying to find relevant experience within your chosen field means you will be able to draw from real world examples and experience at interviews. And you will already be developing an impressive resume and professional network before you officially commence on your career path.

Remember to integrate your experiences into your resume and be prepared to talk about them in an interview scenario. For example, a great way to demonstrate your problem-solving skills in an interview is to tell a story about a relevant experience using the IDEAL model².

identify
define
examine
act
look

what was the issue?

what were the obstacles?

what were your options?

how did you decide on a course of action?

how did it turn out?

A great way to demonstrate your problem-solving skills in an interview is to tell a story about a relevant experience using the **ideal model**.

² Bransford, J.D. and Stein, B.S. (1984), *The ideal problem solver: a guide for improving thinking, learning, and creativity*. Freeman, New York.

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Types of workplace experience

There are a number of ways you can gain work experience during your studies and while you are seeking work.

Part-time / casual work

International students can work up to 40 hours per fortnight during study periods, and unlimited hours during study breaks.

Some of the benefits include:

- Access to potential referees
- Building a track record and an Australian employment history
- Demonstrates reliability, time management and readiness for work
- Increases your knowledge and understanding of Australian workplace practices
- Develops your interpersonal skills (e.g. speaking and listening)
- Working within a team builds skills like cooperation, initiative and teamwork
- Provides you with an opportunity to meet and interact with a diverse range of people who become part of your social and professional network
- Skill building: customer service, conflict resolution, money handling, computer and telephone skills.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to build up your confidence and develop a range of skills. Employers are looking for students who engage in their local community and can demonstrate skills such as initiative, teamwork, cultural fit and communication skills. There are many different ways to get involved in formal and informal volunteering – clubs and societies, sporting organisations, local school and community groups, or faith-based communities through your local church, mosque or synagogue. All volunteer roles are non-paid.

Some of the benefits include:

- Gain experience and acquire new skills, which looks great on your resume
- Increase your Australian network and develop friendships within your adopted community
- An insight into Australian lifestyle and culture
- Develop your English language and interpersonal skills by interacting with a diverse range of people, ages and ethnicities
- Gain local referees.

Look up Seek Volunteer, Volunteering Australia, Go Volunteer and Australian Volunteer Search. Your local council will also have volunteering programs.

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Work-integrated learning

Education and training programs are increasingly embedding opportunities for professional experience into courses. This usually takes the form of internships, real-world projects or simulated workplace experiences.

By building industry experience into your studies, you can:

- Apply your theoretical knowledge to professional tasks
- Develop transferable skills such as problem-solving and team work
- Communicate with people in diverse roles
- Enhance your digital literacy skills.

Find out more about WIL opportunities in your education or training program through your course adviser or careers office.

Paid internships

Internships are highly sought after and highly competitive. They have become more popular with many companies as a precursor to graduate roles or entry-level positions and are generally targeted to students in their second last year of studies and are usually for fixed periods (e.g. three months over summer, or part-time over a semester).

Internships provide paid support and real-world experience with a company and include supervision, structured training and staff development. In some cases, they may lead to a graduate position for stand out candidates.

Some of the benefits include:

- Expand your network
- Build confidence and technical knowledge
- Build skills and experience in your chosen field
- 'Try before you buy' – road test a role or career
- Earn some income.

Under the Fair Work Act, work experience needs to be paid, except where it is voluntary work with a not-for-profit organisation or part of your course.



Read about the regulations around paid and unpaid internships.

Overseas experience: exploring global opportunities

Consider going on exchange or undergoing a study experience abroad in a third country. Exchange or study abroad is usually recommended for second year students, so it is important you do some research and begin planning for this experience in your first year.

Exchange: usually one or two semesters at a partner institution. Credits are given towards your Australian degree and cost of study included in your fees at your home institution.

Study abroad: If you wish to attend a non-partner institution you can go on a self-funded study abroad semester or short-term program.

These types of programs are becoming increasingly popular for international students because they provide a variety of skills and are highly valued by employers.

Visit the global mobility or learning abroad office on campus to find out more about different opportunities that might be available.

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Arun Sivasubramanian

Former intern, now QA Engineer at Carsales.com.au

Arun first joined **Carsales.com.au** as an intern, as part of a Professional Year Program. Within a week of starting his internship, his initial “fear of survival” turned into a fear of not being able to utilise all of the opportunities available.

After completing an internship, his supervisors were so impressed that they offered him a permanent full-time role. He's since gone from strength to strength, having a tremendous impact in the workplace.

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finding work & identifying **opportunities**

Before you begin your job search, it's a good idea to become familiar with the sector you wish to work in. That includes understanding graduate opportunities, the recruitment process and the types of career paths available.

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Researching recruitment in your industry

It is important to know when the major employers in your sector are likely to be recruiting and what types of skills they are looking for. This will differ from country to country.

In Australia, as a guide:

- Applications for graduate roles and winter internships usually open in late February and close towards the end of April. Graduate roles usually start in February the following year.
- Universities usually host career fairs and employer sessions on campus during March and April.
- Applications for summer internships are usually open in July–August.

Visit career fairs and attend industry information and career planning sessions hosted by your institution. Arrive prepared, prioritise the organisations you wish to target and treat it as though it's an informal interview – employers often use these events to assess talent in the market. Sometimes you may come away with some leads, while others are less promising, but don't be discouraged; each time you will be developing a sense for the skills and competencies required in your field of work.

Ask questions of recruiters, recent graduates, interns, career counsellors and your friends and begin building up an understanding of what skills and attributes you will need for the career you want. Find out what skills and attributes companies are looking for and start looking for opportunities to develop these skills.

Searching for positions

During your research, find where employers in your field advertise and become familiar with how each recruitment channel works.

Here are some things you can do:

- Look in the career sections on your ideal employer websites
- Sign-up for job sites specific to your sector and join large recruitment sites such as [Seek.com](https://www.seek.com.au) and [CareerOne.com.au](https://www.careerone.com.au) for custom email alerts
- Use the career services at your institutions
- Talk to your friends, family and other students about any opportunities they know about
- Set up a professional profile on LinkedIn and follow key companies.

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Networking and the 'hidden' job market

Many jobs aren't formally advertised, especially short-term and part-time jobs that provide a way to build your networks and your experience. This is known as the hidden job market.

One of the key tips to enhancing your employability is to expand your personal network. To build strong personal relationships you need to have excellent communication skills and make authentic, meaningful connections with people you interact with in your daily life.

Improving your networking skills is important throughout your entire career, not just when you are starting out. Building professional connections can provide you with valuable opportunities to work towards your career goals. Keep in mind that networking does not mean one person providing all the information and opportunities to another. It is about building mutually beneficial relationships during the course of your career.

A successful networker need not attend every single conference or event, nor join every committee or association. Rather, choose wisely and supplement these activities with other informal networking opportunities that exist in your day-to-day work and social life.



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a day in the life of an effective networker



- ✓ Join a professional association connected to your field of study and participate in networking events, conferences and information sessions.
- ✓ Many professional associations – such as CPA Australia, Engineers Australia and the Australian Computer Society – have discounted fees for students and provide online resources, job opportunities and career advice for members.
- ✓ Use social media to maintain and follow-up with your connections
- ✓ Volunteering is a popular way for young people to gain meaningful work experience and interpersonal skills while giving something back to their local community. Many corporations look for candidates with volunteering or community engagement on their resume.
- ✓ Keep connected with family and friends back home. Nurture these relationships and maintain them via social media. You are building a global network!
- ✓ Consider making use of family connections to gain work experience back home during the holidays via job-shadowing, informational interviewing, internships or vocational placements.

Read 'The importance of networking (and how to do it well)'

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Develop a professional social media profile

Employers are increasingly screening their candidates' social media profiles. What you express and write on your profile page can give employers additional insight into your values as well as your writing and communication capability.

Your online behaviour is an extension of your professional brand, so it is important to be accountable and responsive. Make sure you are aware of which aspects of your online presence are public and which are private. Consider revising your privacy settings to ensure that your personal profiles are private.

Meanwhile, develop a more professional public social media profile that can be viewed by potential employers, using LinkedIn or a similar professional network in your industry. Use your public profile to build your personal brand, connect with prospective mentors and clients, and develop your communication and interpersonal skills.

Make your LinkedIn profile an extension of yourself so it is working for you, even if you aren't working!



Read this blog post about 'How to stand out from the crowd on LinkedIn'.



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Consider small and medium sized enterprises

Entry-level positions in small and medium-sized enterprises are less competitive than in large organisations and they often have fewer restrictions in terms of visa requirements and language proficiency. Some of the benefits of working in small and medium-sized enterprises include:

- Skills and experience are often very 'hands on' and give you a broader understanding of the way businesses work
- You are often given early responsibilities, which increases your confidence and gives you a higher profile within the company that you might not have in a larger organisation
- You may be exposed to and able to contribute to many different areas of the business, rather than being pigeon-holed into a certain type of role
- You may be able to use this role to make the step to a larger organisation after a few years, because large corporates are attracted to the generalist skills developed in small business.

Use a recruitment agency and build experience with short-term contracts

Consider using a recruitment agency in your field to take on short-term contracts. Employers pay recruitment agencies in Australia to find appropriate staff for short-term roles and this is a great way to build your technical skills and gain an insight into Australian workplace culture. For many graduates, short-term opportunities are a stepping-stone towards a more permanent position.

Some popular agencies include:

[Hays.com.au](https://www.hays.com.au)

[Dixonappointments.com.au](https://www.dixonappointments.com.au)

[Hudson.com](https://www.hudson.com)

[Drakeintl.com](https://www.drakeintl.com)

[Randstad.com.au](https://www.randstad.com.au)

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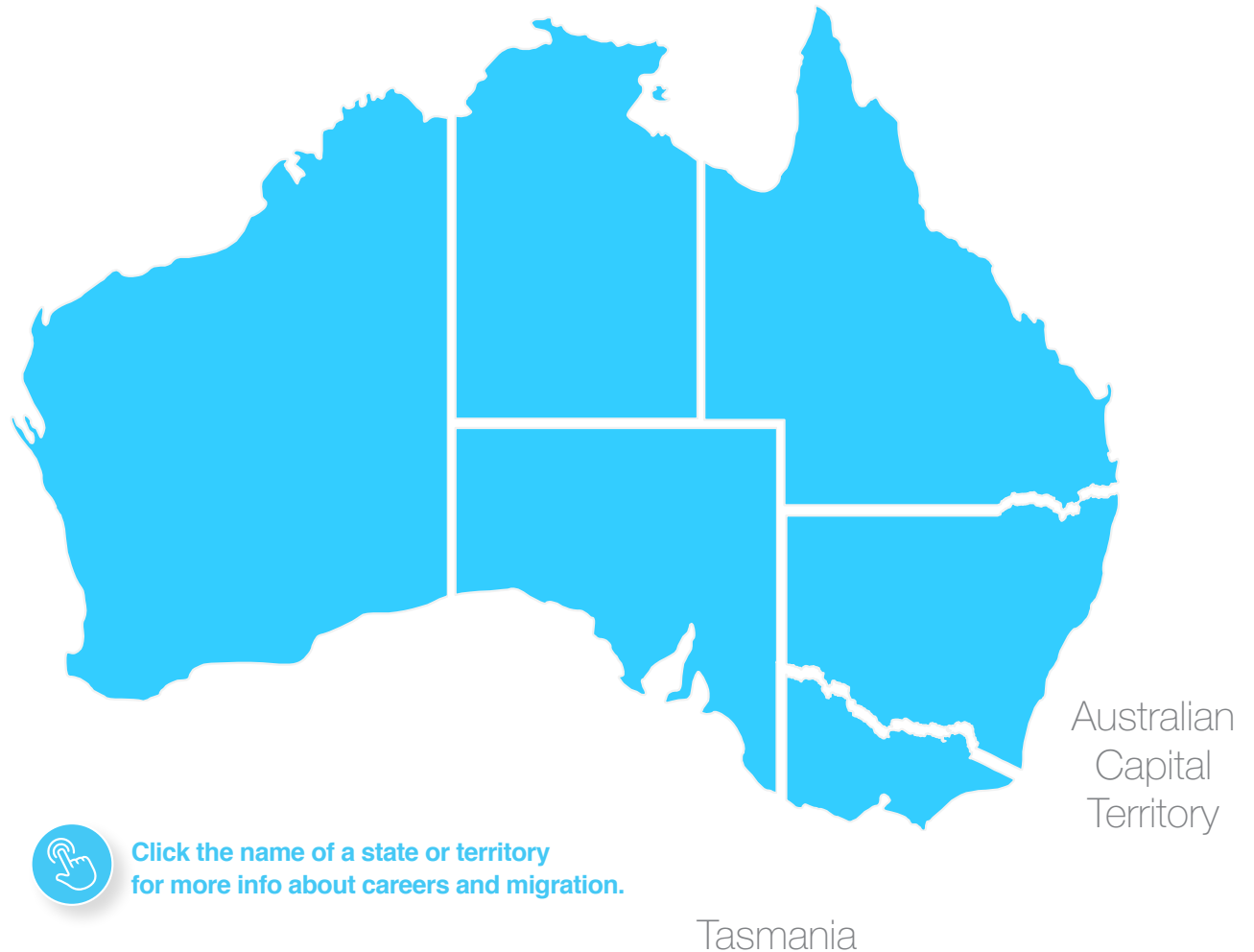
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Relocating within Australia

If you are committed to living and working in Australia, it is worth expanding your job search to include other states and regional areas where opportunities may be more plentiful.

Many states are actively searching for professional people to move into their local region, with many towns offering incentives and sponsorship to attract skilled professionals. Regional communities can also offer a unique Australian culture and lifestyle.

As a first step, try changing your search location parameters in job search websites like [Seek.com](#) and [CareerOne.com.au](#). Each Australian state and territory has a website with information about career and migration opportunities.



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Researching opportunities back home... or in other countries

There are many opportunities open to you as an Australian educated graduate. If you are keen to go back home after you graduate it is important that you stay in touch with what is happening in your home labour market while you are studying in Australia.



- Investigate the entry requirements and recruitment cycle in your own region and don't forget to apply back home for that dream role or internship.
- Keep up-to-date with news in your sector – read local websites, join local professional associations and keep informed about the economic and political activities in your region
- Target multinational or Australian companies in your region who are looking for bilingual staff with a global perspective and apply for graduate programs or internship opportunities
- Find out what skills and attributes are valued by recruiters in your region and work towards building these into your resume
- Create a region-specific resume in your own language and in English for multinationals
- Join and participate with your Australian alumni network – sign up to be part of your local institution's chapter
- Use LinkedIn and social media and promote your unique personal brand – remember to promote your language and intercultural capabilities. Reconnect with your in-country networks.

If you are keen to work overseas in a third country at the end of your studies, it is important that during your studies you start researching and preparing your skills for the region in which you are interested. You may want to find out more about the region's lifestyle and culture by searching online, visiting for a holiday or undertaking an exchange semester or study tour as part of your studies. The options are endless, but make sure you do your homework. Here are some questions to consider:

- Where do you want to go and why? How long would you like to stay?
- What opportunities are open to a citizen from your country? Will you require sponsorship or a special visa to live and work in this country?
- Will you require additional language skills? If so, what will you need to do to qualify for work in this country? Do you need to study the language and to what level?
- What are the living conditions and salaries like? Do you need health insurance?
- What will be the long-term career benefits?
- Will your qualifications and experience be recognised?
- Do you have any family or connections that could provide information on living and working there, or who could support you in your job hunt?

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applying for a role

When you apply for jobs, it is important to be flexible. Many jobs start out as short-term contracts or casual positions that lead to something more permanent.

APPLY NOW

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As a new graduate, you might work in a variety of fields before finding the right fit for you. When you apply for jobs:

- Be flexible. Many jobs start out as short-term contracts or casual positions that lead to something more permanent
- Be realistic about the roles you apply for
- Be willing to start at entry-level and work your way up.

The job application process assesses your ability to communicate effectively via several steps:

- Writing: responding to selection criteria, writing tests and applications, tailored resumes, emails and cover letters
- Speaking: talking about yourself in interviews, answering behavioural-based questions, analysing case studies, psychometric testing and assessment centre group tasks.

When applying online you will need to write concise answers and be mindful of the word limit. It is vital that you address the question and demonstrate your technical and enterprise skills with examples from your work or study history.

Give examples of projects you've undertaken within your studies, volunteering, work experience or extra-curricular activities to demonstrate your skills.

Employers want to know what your overall goal or drive is. Don't forget to include your motivation or overall suitability for the role.

Tailor your CV to each job you apply for

When you are ready to apply for internships and graduate roles, ensure that your resume or CV is up-to-date, of a high standard and showing attention to detail. Triple check for grammar and spelling errors! It is essential to tailor both your cover letter and resume to skills required of the position. Take the time to read through the job duties and think about the skills you can bring. Give yourself the best chance to show employers that you can perform this particular role, rather than sending a generic resume and hoping that employers will guess.

Try these great sites for help setting up your resume:



TOP TIP

APPLY THE 'WHY SHOULD THEY HIRE ME?' TEST

Start with an 'elevator pitch' that sums up your skills and goals in no more than three sentences. Stand out to prospective employers by adapting your resume so it is relevant to the role in question by:

- Ensuring it is relevant to the role you are applying for (not just any role)
- Making your strengths clear
- Keeping your cover letter concise and to the point (don't waste time with filler information).

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Preparing for interview

There are a range of interview types including panel, assessment centre, one-on-one, telephone or even Skype. To help you feel more at ease, find out what type of interview it will be and who will be conducting it.

Preparation and practice are the keys to a successful interview. Prepare yourself thoroughly – ensure you understand the role you've applied for, the key duties and what you can offer. Read up on the organisation's vision or mission statement, core business, strategic direction and competitors and try to understand how the role you've applied for fits into the bigger picture.

Prepare examples that demonstrate where you have developed the skills they are looking for. If you can communicate how your strengths would be an asset to them, you're more likely to convince a potential employer that you are right for the role.

On a more practical level, if you are applying in Australia, be ready to explain your visa status and your work rights.

interview tips



ARRIVE EARLY, DRESS PROFESSIONALLY, TURN OFF YOUR PHONE!

Research parking and/or transport options well before so your journey to the interview is stress free. Ensure you are dressed neatly and appropriately for the type of role and make sure your phone is on silent or better still, turn it off to avoid any awkward interruptions!



DO YOUR RESEARCH

In Australia, competition for jobs is high. Just having a qualification does not guarantee that you will land the job of your dreams. You need to differentiate yourself from the competition. Once you proceed to the interview stage, recruiters expect you to know about their organisation. During the application process many companies ask what you know about them and how your skills will fit into the role and the organisational culture. Be strategic and target companies that suit you and your skill set, rather than applying for hundreds of jobs online. Again, always tailor your resume and cover letter to suit each job.



ASK GREAT QUESTIONS

Come prepared with a question or two. An interview is a great way to show what you can bring, but it is also your opportunity to ask questions of the employer and find out whether their key values match with your own personal beliefs and values. Ask yourself: is this an environment in which I could thrive?

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creating your own job

The nature of work is constantly changing and the traditional pathway from study to permanent full-time employment is becoming less common.

If you've got a great idea – along with drive, knowledge and passion – you could consider creating your own opportunities or starting your own business.

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Developing an entrepreneurial mindset

An entrepreneurial mindset includes attitudes and personal characteristics such as problem-solving, risk taking, persistence and the ability to communicate with a variety of people. You might apply this mindset to starting or running a small business, but you can apply such thinking in your involvement with community groups (such as student clubs and societies) or in the way you approach a job in a large organisation.

Initiative, determination and creative problem solving are needed in all types of organisations, particularly small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups which make up the majority of businesses in Australia. Being able to recognise these skills within yourself and articulating how you can add value to a business can give you a competitive edge.

As an international student you are at an advantage – studying abroad requires some risk, getting out of your comfort zone and finding solutions to unexpected problems. Many students have created their own jobs or volunteer opportunities from sheer necessity without realising that in doing so they are building strong entrepreneurial capabilities.

So you want to be your own boss?

If you've got a great idea – along with drive, knowledge and passion – you could consider creating your own opportunities or starting your own business.

Ensure you have done your research on what is involved in the start-up journey. The best way to do this is to work with a mentor who has been through the process before. While there is no set formula that guarantees start-up success, there are many lessons you can learn from successful entrepreneurs. Find out the common mistakes to avoid and where you can get support so that you are prepared for the challenges (and rewards) ahead.



TOP TIPS

- Use your international background and networks to your advantage
- Take initiative and learn from entrepreneurship principles
- Get hands-on experiences at start-up weekends, hakathons, pitchfests and bootcamps
- Find a solution to a real problem
- Understand the attributes and challenges of running a start-up
- Find a team of talents
- Develop a business plan
- Know your local start-up ecosystem
- Take advantage of incubator and accelerator programs
- Find experienced mentors and embed yourself in support communities.

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Elva Zhang

Maritime lawyer and Founder of Peace Lab

Elva is a former international student from China, who also has a Master of Law from Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to working as a lawyer, Elva founded Peace Lab, which aims to inspire mindfulness and stress management through meditation, laughter and play therapy.

Peace Lab was born out of Elva's own experience dealing with stress, anxiety and negative self-talk, initially as an international student alone in a foreign country and then as a lawyer working in highly stressful jobs. It has given her valuable experience in resilience, entrepreneurship and business skills.

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know your **rights**

Australia has laws protecting all workers, including international students, from exploitative practices. These laws govern what employers should pay and the working conditions to which employees are entitled.

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Facts and myths about working in Australia

Australia has laws protecting all workers from exploitative practices. These laws govern what employers should pay and the compulsory working conditions to which employees are entitled. This includes hours of work, break times, occupational health and safety requirements, and leave entitlements.

When you accept a job offer, make sure you and your employer are clear on the expectations around these important factors:

- Your agreed pay rate
- When you will be paid
- Your job duties
- Your employment status (e.g. full-time, part-time or casual)
- What time you should start and finish work
- How many hours you will be working per week
- If you are entitled to penalty rates
- If you are entitled to an allowance
- If there is an award (a national legal document that outlines the minimum pay rates and conditions) or registered agreement covering your job.

Get a tax file number

All workers in Australia require a tax file number (TFN), issued to you by the Australian Government so that you can work legally and pay tax. A TFN must be supplied to your employer so they can pay tax on your behalf. If you are working for 'cash in hand' you are not protected by the law and may not be receiving the wages and conditions you are entitled to.

Ensure you are paid what you are worth

When applying for and accepting a position it is important to do your research and know how much you are entitled to be paid. Use the Fairwork Pay Calculator to work out your pay rates, penalties and allowances. If you are under 21 years of age, then you are entitled to junior wages. This is a sliding scale and differs for each industry.



Use the Fairwork Pay Calculator to work out your pay rates and allowances.

Discrimination

By law, employers are not allowed to discriminate or harass staff in relation to:

- Race
- Religion
- Political beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Carer or parental status
- Physical features.

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The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO)

It is important that you know your rights in the workplace. The FWO protects all people working in Australia and ensures basic rights and fair treatment is enforced. The FWO is an important resource to familiarise yourself with, ideally before you commence work.

This fact sheet for international students will help you understand your basic workplace rights, where to obtain further information, and how to seek assistance from the FWO in the case of a dispute.

For more information, contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au.

Fair Work OMBUDSMAN

International students

Like many international students, you may get a part-time or casual job to help pay your living expenses while you study in Australia. It is important that you know your rights in the workplace.

All people working in Australia have basic rights and protections in the workplace, including minimum pay and conditions. The Fair Work Ombudsman makes sure that these rights are protected and enforced fairly under Australia's workplace laws.

This fact sheet will help you understand your basic workplace rights, where to obtain further information, and how to seek assistance from the Fair Work Ombudsman. For more information, contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au.

All references to an award or agreement in this fact sheet include modern awards, enterprise agreements, and award or agreement-based transitional instruments.

What is the difference between full-time, part-time and casual work?

Full-time employees generally work 38 hours per week, and receive pay for a full week's work as well as conditions like paid annual leave and sick leave. A full-time worker is also entitled to notice of termination of their employment. This means that if your employer no longer wants to employ you, they have to provide a period of notice (or payment instead of the notice period) depending on how long you have worked there.

Part-time employees work regular hours each week, but less than the 38 hours of full-time employees. You generally receive the same benefits as full-time workers, but they are calculated on the basis of the hours you work.

Casual employees work on an hourly or daily basis and are less likely to have regular or guaranteed hours of work. Casual employees do not get paid sick leave or annual leave, but the rates of pay are usually higher to make up for this. A casual employee is usually not entitled to notice of termination. This means a casual employee can be terminated at any time.

Regardless of your type of employment, you must have permission to work in Australia and hold a valid work visa. It is important you understand the rules of your work visa before starting a job, including the number of hours you are allowed to work each week. For information on visa requirements, contact the Department Home Affairs on 13 18 81 or visit <http://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au>.

What are my minimum rights and conditions at work?

From 1 January 2010, all employees in the national workplace relations system receive 10 basic minimum entitlements known as the National Employment Standards (NES).

The NES include:

- Maximum weekly hours of work
- Requests for flexible working arrangements
- Parental leave and related entitlements
- Annual leave
- Personal/carer's leave, and compassionate leave and family and domestic violence leave
- Community service leave
- Long service leave
- Public holidays
- Notice of termination and redundancy pay
- Provision of a Fair Work Information Statement

Please note, only certain NES entitlements apply to casual employees. For more information on the NES, please see the [Fair Work Ombudsman Fact Sheet - Introduction to the National Employment Standards](#).

Your minimum rights and conditions at work may be set by a legal document like an award, an agreement, or a contract of employment. Ask your employer which one applies to you to find out how you are affected.

If an award or agreement does not apply, all employees in the national workplace relations system will receive basic minimum pay, conditions and protections under Commonwealth workplace laws.

If you are asked to sign any type of document agreeing to specific work conditions, make sure you read it very carefully and understand it before signing. Keep a copy for your records. You should not feel undue pressure to sign any agreement with your employer. If you do, contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

Your award or agreement should tell you things like:

- your minimum rate of pay - your employer can pay you more than the minimum if they want to, but they cannot pay you less
- when you will be paid - you should be paid at least once a month

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94 www.fairwork.gov.au



Download the Fair Work Ombudsman's fact sheet for international students.

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