

# Careers resources for International Students

## Careers Fair guide for international students

Careers fairs within Australia are designed to provide students with an opportunity to meet industry professionals and gain essential information on recruitment processes and industry expectations.

It is important to note that careers fairs do not provide jobs on the day and students should not attend with the expectation of securing a graduate program or placement on the day.

### If there are no jobs offered, why should I attend?

#### 1. Opportunities to meet employers face-to-face

This is your time to practice your professional communication skills. Make sure you have particular questions you'd like to ask. Remember: good eye contact, smile and be confident when asking questions.

#### 2. To make a strong impression in person

Your interactions are very important and will complement your written applications

#### 3. Networking to build industry connections

This is particularly relevant to international students hoping to create opportunities for the future. Once you have gained local work experience, you may be able to call on the contacts you establish now to seek opportunities later.

#### 4. To learn more about employers than you can learn from their websites

You can learn about the culture of an organisation when you meet their people and ask questions.

#### 5. To see what opportunities may be available to international students

Each organisation has different eligibility requirements. If it is a global organisation, they may have opportunities or contacts in your home country. Always research the company's requirements and office locations prior to asking if they accept international students.

#### 6. Check for international positions

Ask about international opportunities in your home country and possible recruitment contacts. Also, clarify on any particular skills and abilities that the international offices may value.

### What should I ask or talk to employers/recruiters about?

It is crucial that you research the companies attending beforehand so that you are able to initiate a discussion with confidence and have a clear understanding of what information you would like to gain from them.

Below is a list of key questions to ask.

- What are the expectations placed on new graduates?
- What learning and development opportunities exist within the organisation?
- How would they describe the work culture?
- What sort of projects have they worked on?
- What helped them succeed in the interview process?
- If they do not offer graduate programs to international students, are there international opportunities?

### Online Resources

As a UQ student or alumnus/a, you now have access to GoinGlobal, which provides resources on work permit/visa regulations, job search sources, resume tips, cultural/interviewing advice.

**[online.goinglobal.com](https://online.goinglobal.com)**

You also have access to UQ's Global Grad international job search tool for international opportunities.

**[globalgrad.uq.edu.au](https://globalgrad.uq.edu.au)**

# At the careers event

This is a fantastic learning opportunity for you that will assist in building confidence in your industry knowledge and insight into the Australian work culture. We hope you find the experience informative and that you meet many inspirational professionals.

## Always

- Introduce yourself and use good body language. Stand tall, firm handshake, good eye contact, be yourself and SMILE!
- Be confident in how you can contribute to that employer, why you have chosen your degree & exploring the opportunities available to you.
- Show your genuine interest in the company and be attentive when they respond to your questions.
- Prepare a couple of questions before speaking to the employer. Refer to the sample questions.
- Collect and relevant brochures, handouts and business cards.

## Things to Avoid

- Underestimate yourself. You have unique skills, attributes and experiences that may be valuable to the employer
- Rule an employer out because of their industry. All organisations require staff from many disciplines. Surprise yourself and speak to some employers in industries you would not usually speak to!
- Discuss weaknesses! Only highlight POSITIVES!
- Walk around in groups. Approach all employers on your own, as you need to practice networking and building confidence in initiating professional conversation.



# Australian employer expectations for international students

If you are seeking employment or experience opportunities for the first time in Australia, you may have already noticed some of the significant differences in employer expectations and job searching compared to your home country.

Discovering these differences and implementing them into your Australian job search techniques will significantly enhance your opportunities for success.

## Steps to increase your employability in Australia

- Discover what employer expectations are
- Understand the Australian workplace culture
- Develop essential skills and attributes
- Get local experience in Australia
- Navigate Australian employment opportunities
- Improve your employability in Australia
- Ensure you complete the essential checklist for eligibility to work

## 1 Discover what employer expectations are

In order to be a competitive candidate, employers look for applicants who:

1. Meet eligibility requirements (VISA, GPA, Degree, Skills and Attributes)
2. Have the technical skills and capability to competently undertake the advertised job tasks.
3. Have the potential to be moved into different roles including more senior positions.

In addition, recruiters are looking for candidates with the following:

- Confidence as a person and confidence in their unique skills/attributes.
- Recognition of other people's skills and how teams function successfully.
- Well-developed interpersonal skills with the ability to form relationships.
- Excellent communication skills to promote and transfer their expertise.
- A genuine interest in the role or industry with a sound understanding of industry needs
- History of personal/professional development aided by exposure to challenging situations.
- Graduate professional skills such as problem solving, critical analysis, time management & ability to work autonomously.
- Mature work ethic, positive attitude, motivated, flexible, approachable, adaptable to change and leadership skills.

## 2 Understand Australian workplace culture

All regions across the globe have developed their own national cultures as well as workplace culture. Things such as

- How you present your values in a job,
- The manner in which you engage with colleagues and senior staff members within an organisation, and
- The unwritten rules that exist in business

take on a different context depending upon which country you are living in and the position you hold within the company hierarchy.

In Australia, employers expect all new employees to observe the company culture and alter their own style to 'fit in'. This by no means requires an individual to change their total personality, but perhaps change their style. For example, it may require presenting ideas to a manager in a different way than you did in a previous role.

### Australian workplace characteristics of staff

- As an equality-based society, superiors are accessible. Information is shared frequently to staff of all levels.
- Employees are expected to be self-reliant, work independently (under limited supervision) and display initiative; hiring and promotions decisions are based on evidence of what one has done or can do, not just qualifications.
- Communication is upfront with direct questions to both colleagues and supervisors. Being proactive and assertive is considered constructive.
- Employees are expected to have a work-life balance. Take time to enjoy personal pursuits.



- Organisations and teams are heavily strategic but also measure their performance on a short-term basis (quarterly basis); all levels within the business strive for quick results within the workplace.

## 3 Develop essential skills, attributes and experiences

1. Australian employers value eye contact, a friendly attitude and the ability to move from a polite conversation, 'small talk', to an engaging discussion about industry or the business. Practice your conversation skills during professional networking events.
2. Your ideas and skills are highly valuable, even as a new employee. Observe how other staff present ideas to determine the best approach. When raising ideas and suggestions initially, it may be helpful to ask if something similar has been proposed or has previously been in place. This will give you extra background and identify you as a team player with initiative.
3. Make the effort to speak up! Especially during meetings, it is essential that you offer your viewpoint or at least ask questions. In most cases you will not be expected to be a silent observer. If you are unsure of what your level of participation should be during a meeting, speak to your supervisor beforehand and get some tips for possible questions to ask and information to gather.

## 4 Navigate Australian employment opportunities

1. There are a large variety of work types in Australia, advertised at different times and locations online. Refer to the job searching fact sheet for in-depth details and instruction.
2. Online and in-person networking is essential to develop and maintain professional networks. These connections may be beneficial immediately or in your future profession.
3. Employers have high expectations that applicants are genuine and have a sound understanding of the company and industry they are applying for. Ensure you research thoroughly and use information you find in your application.
4. Domestic opportunities are generally available online and for an internship or graduate program require a 1 page cover letter, a 2 page resume and a selection criteria/online responses.
5. Strengthen your interview skills and understand what is expected in your interview responses - review the interview skills guide.

## 5 Improve your employability in Australia

The information previously discussed in this guide should have given you a good insight into the different expectations employers in Australia may have of you when compared to your home country. If you would like to increase your employability prospects, follow the guidelines below.

1. **Employers have high expectations of your English language skills - mostly your colloquial English. Your IELTS score may be relevant for some applications, however most employers will be gauging your English language skills through:**

- Your cover letter, resume and selection criteria.
- Your understanding of what content was required in your application.
- Networking events, such as careers fairs.
- Interviews, including video interviews.

Improve your English skills through expanding your social circle - join clubs and societies, undertake casual employment and volunteering, read books and watch movies in English.

2. **Research what type of skills and experiences are expected by future employers. Do you already have these skills? Which skills or experiences are you lacking? Where can you gain these?**

- Look at positions of interest and conduct a skills audit to determine how you meet the criteria or what you need to improve on.

3. **Do you have the application skills for the country you are interested in applying to?**

- If you are seeking experience in Australia, please attend the Resume, Job Searching, Networking and Interview Skills workshops. You are also welcome to book an appointment to discuss a career enquiry, resume review or mock interview.
- If you are looking at employment opportunities in your home country or another region, use GoinGlobal and UQ's Global Grad for resources and to see opportunities.

### 4. Skill development

Many Australian employers expect some experience and basic employability skills from candidates. You can gain these skills by:

- Participate in a variety of volunteering opportunities; several one day activities and 1-2 longer term ones requiring strong contribution is important.
- Casual employment, where you are required to speak English, will develop your language and interpersonal skills, team work, initiative, as well as prove you can be responsible, trust worthy and are worth hiring! More importantly, the situations that occur while working in casual employment are often



excellent examples and evidence of your skills in applications and interviews. Book an appointment with the UQ Union for casual job searching assistance.

- Internships: There are a variety of different internships available and most are open to international students. Many students complete a non-paid internship with a not-for-profit organisation prior to being successful in gaining a coveted paid internship.
- Part time industry employment can be extremely difficult to secure but is a wonderful stepping stone to full time work in your industry.

#### 5. Referees

It is essential that you make an effort to acquire professional or character referees who are based in Australia. Although you can list referees from any country, Australian employers prefer to call a referee who is based in Australia. Australian employers do not generally accept written references but rather prefer to ask a set of questions which relate specifically to the position and company. In large government organisations, your referee may be emailed the questions for record keeping instead of a phone call..

- Referees are asked similar questions that you answered in your interview.
- Referees are asked to speak about at least one of your challenges/weaknesses.
- A telephone reference check can take between 10-15 minutes.
- References will only be called after an interview and before you are offered the role.

Your referee must be your champion and have the ability to sell you into the role while being completely truthful. Volunteering and casual jobs supervisors are perfect individuals to request as referees.

## 6 Your checklist to success

- ☐ Check that you are eligible to work in Australia with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- ☐ Understand the Australian tax systems and get your tax file number [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)
- ☐ Check if your existing qualifications and skills meet Australian standards (e.g. VETASSESS skills assessment)

### Improve your English communication skills

- ☐ Join clubs and groups that only speak English. Listen to the radio, watch TV, films and read books in English
- ☐ Make friends with locals to improve your English language skills

### Get local work experience to understand Australian culture and workplace expectations

- ☐ Work in a part-time or casual job during semester or fulltime during the holidays
- ☐ Seek opportunities in your industry field which will give you experience related to your studies (e.g. voluntary job in your industry)

### Take part in extra-curricular activities

- ☐ Take part in activities with clubs, professional associations and teams to develop your employability skills that employers value (e.g. time management, leadership, teamwork and communication skills)

# Going abroad or overseas

**If you are going abroad, you may be interested in seeking employment or gaining experience while you are away. All experiences gained overseas are valuable to future employers, so take the opportunity to learn more about employer expectations and how you can meet them through personal and professional development overseas.**

## Options as part of my exchange program

**“I am going on exchange, so I would like to focus on my study and experience in a new country.”**

Employers are impressed by your understanding and articulation of your experiences, regardless of if they are in a professional setting or not. Skill development usually is recognised from situations where you have overcome obstacles and barriers. Reflect on your journey while away and after you return. Consider how your experiences will benefit a future employer.

**“I am going on exchange; I'd like to do more than study while I'm there!”**

Wonderful! You will have many opportunities to engage and develop. On arrival, meet with the Careers Service at your host university and ask about advice for casual job search, volunteer opportunities and clubs and societies on campus. Many students complete professional internships while abroad. Check with your host university about insurance.

## Gap year

**“I'd like to take a break during my studies and go travelling/work overseas.”**

While you are overseas, you have the advantage of gaining some experience, even for just a few months during your break. Look into insurance and use GoinGlobal to investigate employers and living conditions/pay in different countries. Australian recruiters are positive about students who have taken breaks in study and gained experience overseas due to potential personal and professional development.

## International employment

**“I would like to apply for graduate employment in my home country/overseas.”**

Each region recruits differently, therefore job searching varies also. Check GoinGlobal for information ranging from income, popular employers, job search and sample applications for a range of countries. The guide below will assist you if you are interested in applying for a graduate position overseas.

### Important information to know

1. When do employers recruit?
2. Which employers are recruiting?
3. Will you be eligible to apply?
4. When can you apply if your graduation date does not correspond exactly with the start dates in your country of choice?
5. What will assist you to become a competitive candidate?

**For further details, please contact:**

#### Careers Service

Student Employability Centre

[careers@uq.edu.au](mailto:careers@uq.edu.au)

[employability.uq.edu.au/find-a-job](http://employability.uq.edu.au/find-a-job)



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