



Charles Sturt  
University

# Changing careers

Get ready for your next new beginning

Whether you're looking for a career change at 30. A career change at 40. Or even a career change at 50, the thing to remember is...

...there's no such thing as 'it's too late'.



You can do it

And we'll help you.

In this guide we'll take you through the steps to changing careers, look at study options to make it happen, and introduce you to people who have already done it.

Get ready for your next new beginning.

# Reasons to change careers

It might be when you are lying in bed before you go sleep. Or when you're out walking the dog. Maybe even on the lunch hour at your current job. Those persistent thoughts. They eventually lead to one question: am I ready for a career change?

The reasons to shift work in another direction could well be as numerous as those looking to make the switch. But there are some that keep cropping up as key drivers of change. Let's take a look at the top reasons to change careers.



## Make a difference

Are you looking to do something more meaningful with your working hours? Something that helps people and gives back to the community. To go from just making money to also making a difference. You might have seen a need during the bushfires, the pandemic or the floods and want a career where you can make people's lives better. Perhaps you want to inspire the next generation of changemakers as a teacher. Or help people cope as a counsellor. It's people who make the difference. People like you.



## Satisfaction

Newsflash: not everyone enjoys their job. You may be one of them. But you're far from being alone. Maybe the pay is not what you expect. The role is unfulfilling, or even that you just feel like you're not growing as a person by doing it day in, day out. We spend a lot of our time at work, so if you want to do something that puts (more of) a smile on your face, a career change is the right move.



## Futureproof your work

The world of work is constantly changing. And at the moment technology is driving a lot of that change. Which could mean one of two things. Either your role may be at risk from automation and you want to change career into something less prone to usurpation. Or you want to take advantage of the opportunities that brings and set yourself up with a tech career. Futureproofing can also mean moving into an area of work where there is, and will continue to be, high demand. Health, education, engineering and psychology are just some of the industries – along with IT – that need more people.



## Work-life balance

You might well have reached the pinnacle in your industry. Absolutely nailed it. But it kind of feels like that's all you've done. Your personal life has taken a backseat to your career. That's pretty common, especially when we are young. But as we get a bit older, our priorities can shift, and putting more time into personal interests and time with family can become more important.



## Passion

Perhaps you have a passion that has – so far – gone unfulfilled. A career that you've often thought about sat on the back burner, as life ran its course. And now you're in a position to grab new opportunities. You can study the subject that fires your imagination and then seek a career that makes the most of your knowledge, skills and drive. Whether it's becoming a midwife to help women at the start of their journey as a parent, or pursuing your admiration for the arts, passion can get you a long way when it comes to a career change.

Any of those • striking a chord?





For Liam Mowbray, getting 'back to the land' was a driving force for his career change.

"I always wanted to have a life on the land and knew I should be working with animals. But I didn't have the marks out of high school to get into veterinary science."

So Liam studied medical radiation science. He then worked full-time as a radiotherapist in a cancer institute in Coffs Harbour. Then he got that feeling at the back of his mind. You know the one.

"By no means did I dislike what I was doing. I was just searching for something else."

That 'something else' for Liam was getting back to the land. But how to change careers? Liam realised he needed to reskill.

"I knew I couldn't just go out and buy large acreage without a career or financial backing. So I decided that a cattle veterinarian would be a good fit. It would mean I could offer a service, alongside my own pursuits as a producer. I was accepted into Charles Sturt's Bachelor of Veterinary Biology / Bachelor of Veterinary Science, based on the marks of my previous undergraduate degree.

"Studying vet science wasn't the easiest endeavour. The study load takes up a lot of time. But you learn to organise yourself along the way – I became better for it."

Liam had job offers from several organisations when he finished his studies. He chose to work as a mixed-practice veterinarian in Taree on the Mid North Coast of NSW.

Reskilling as a vet has allowed Liam and his wife – along with baby boy Billy – to live close to family and build their cattle breeding operation. Liam has realised his dream of a life on the land, working with animals, while supporting his family.

"After six fantastic years studying in Wagga Wagga, I'm very excited to return to the community where I grew up and to give back in what ways I can."

**Liam's advice to others thinking about changing careers?**

"Life is short, so you may as well have a crack."

## From radiotherapist to veterinarian: Liam's story

A career change can be wrapped up in a lifestyle change. Making the move from the city to the country – or vice versa – can be a prompt to reassess other parts of life. Such as your job.

# Steps to changing careers

Even with that sense of 'I know I want to do this' in your mind, the process of changing careers can seem a little daunting. This is your professional life we're talking about, after all.

The good news is that you can break the process down into steps. Making it simpler to navigate and easier to achieve.

## 1. Assess your circumstances

What are – if any – the parts of your job you like? What are the strengths you've developed through your professional experience that are transferable across industries? What do you want out of a career change that you are not getting now? Once you know where you're at, it's a lot easier to work out where you're going next.

## 2. Explore alternative careers

Once you've determined what you want from a career change, start looking at the roles that could provide it. Besides internet research, speak to people in the industries you're considering. We can have notions of what a new role could entail, but only people in it will know what the day-to-day looks like. They can also tell you the pros and cons, so you can make the most informed decision.

## 3. Get some new experience

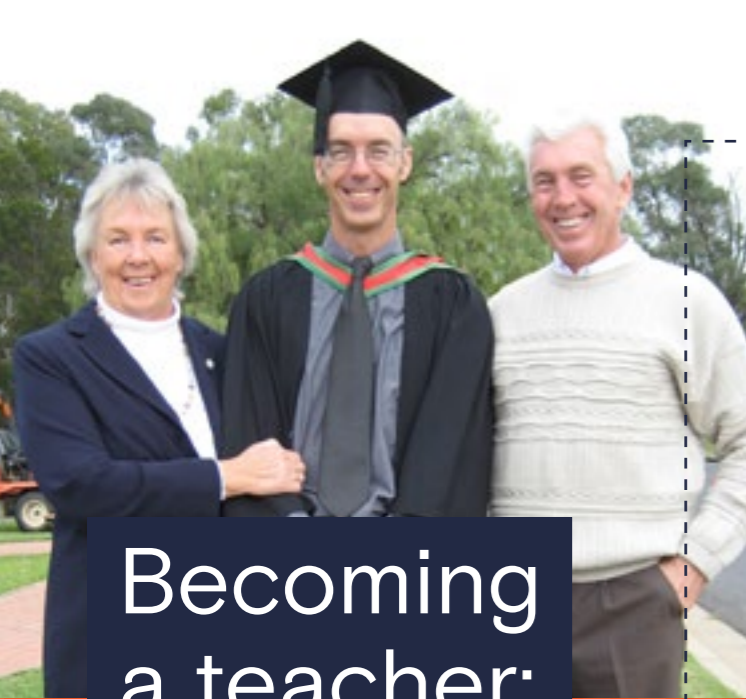
Tap into your network – whether that's your local community, LinkedIn or friends and family – to get some experience of a role you like the look of. You could volunteer, do an internship or ask to shadow someone for a day. Get an on-the-ground look at what your new career could be.

## 4. Find the best way to upgrade your skills

Some career changes don't need new qualifications. Most will need at least some level of new knowledge and skills. This could be a short course or a full degree. Check with employers and relevant professional bodies what qualifications make the most sense to help you move into that industry, so you start with the best upskilling plan.

## 5. Plan for success

Speaking of plans. Once you're ready to change careers, to do some study to get a new qualification, and to seek out new experiences – you need a plan. What time, money and energy can you put towards getting where you want to go? How will studying, for instance, fit in with the other requirements in our life (online study could well be the way to go if you have other commitments, as you can watch lectures whenever it suits).



# Becoming a teacher: Darren's story

Darren Denmead made a career change to become a teacher. He'd had a successful professional life in the corporate world. But a feeling started to creep up on him.

That sense that he wanted to do something that was a bit more tangible in terms of giving back. So he decided to move into teaching. He returned to Charles Sturt later in life to take on his education bachelor's, having previously studied with us straight out of high school. It's a decision he is very pleased he made.

"Let's be honest, who doesn't love the idea of making life a little bit more special for our kids and their families? No matter how trying the day, I go home knowing that I have helped children to believe in themselves and to love learning. Yes, the job is very demanding, but there is no better feeling than when you help kids to learn and to hope."

## Four steps to change careers to teaching

1. **Decide on a teaching area and level. Do you want to teach kindy, primary or secondary? Specialise in science, arts, languages?**
2. **Choose a course. Some courses you can apply for with a VET qualification, professional experience, teaching qualifications or a degree in another area. For example, the Master of Teaching (Primary) and Master of Teaching (Secondary) are open to anyone with a bachelor's, regardless of its subject.**
3. **Apply – Study – Graduate. Choose full-time or part-time, on campus or online. Go at your pace, and picture yourself walking across the stage to receive your testamur.**
4. **Get accredited. If you're applying to teach in NSW schools, you'll need approval to teach from the NSW Department of Education You'll also need to apply for accreditation with the NSW Education Standards Authority.**

→ [study.csu.edu.au/courses/teaching-education](https://study.csu.edu.au/courses/teaching-education)

In his current role, Darren leads a community of school leaders, highly professional teaching staff and a school population of more than 400 students from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures.

And the original drive to change tack and pursue a teaching career – to make a difference and enrich the lives of children with learning, curiosity, a deep connection with culture, and a respect for others – still remains and motivates him every day.

"I love learning and teaching, and my enthusiasm for them grows all the time. Plus, I have presented numerous times to first- and fourth-year Charles Sturt University students over the past few years. I love helping them prepare for – and be inspired by – the best job there is."

# Courses to change careers with

## Micro-credential

Dip your toe into the university waters and upskill quickly for your career with a micro-credential. Gain key skills in as little as eight weeks – skills that are transferable to another industry, such as leadership and project management.

## Single subject

Charles Sturt's single subject study program gives you the chance to get all the latest knowledge in an area of interest. Try out a new area before committing to a full degree. And if you do go on to a related degree, you can get credit for your single subject.

## Undergraduate certificates

Start your uni journey or upskill for your career with an undergraduate certificate. Gain a university qualification in as little as 14 weeks, and receive credit if you go on to study a bachelor's degree.

## Bachelor's degree

Choose from hundreds of qualifications – from agriculture, arts, healthcare and IT, to business, law, social work and teaching. You could get credit for previous studies and/or professional experience. Meaning you can graduate sooner.

## Graduate certificate or diploma

The first step into postgraduate study. Gain a graduate certificate in as little as six months or a diploma in a year.

## Master's degree

Build on your graduate certificate or diploma (with credit for them) and take on a master's degree. Or step straight into the master's, often with credit for your previous experience, to get advanced skills and knowledge.

→ [study.csu.edu.au/courses](https://study.csu.edu.au/courses)

## Discounted graduate certificates in 2023

In 2023, you can change career with a graduate certificate – and get as much as 85 per cent off your fees!

We've increased the number of Commonwealth supported places on select courses – meaning not only can you save on fees, you can also apply for a HECS-HELP loan to pay for your course.

From IT to education, health to human services, find the career change certificate for you.

→ [study.csu.edu.au/graduate-certificate](https://study.csu.edu.au/graduate-certificate)

## How to apply



1. Choose your course.
2. Gather copies of supporting documents – such as transcripts of previous qualifications and your résumé.
3. Apply online – it only takes about 15 minutes.

→ [study.csu.edu.au/apply](https://study.csu.edu.au/apply)



# Moving from sales to health service: Felicity's story

Felicity Smith decided to study a health science bachelor's degree at Charles Sturt University when she wanted to move her professional life towards something that meant more to her than her former role.

"I used to be in sales and customer service. I always knew it wasn't for me and that I wanted to work at something that was meaningful; something I didn't just do in order to pay the bills. Plus, when I had children I wanted them to be proud of their mother. Going to uni never seemed like an option when I was young but after having children I felt more of the need to show them that anyone can live their dreams.

"During my youth, I had seen some pretty interesting work that people were doing in hospitals and healthcare. I guess I always knew what I wanted to be, but perhaps I wasn't aware of how to get to where I needed to go.

"I was worried about not being smart enough for uni, but I was supported every step of the way. I found that people close to me didn't understand why I wanted to go to uni. I was going to be a mature-aged student with a job, a mortgage, a husband, a toddler and a newborn baby! I had heard statements such as 'you are too old', 'you are too busy' and 'you need to spend that time with the kids'. And even that uni is for smart people, not a mother with children. I just decided to not listen to any negativity. I chose to take help from anywhere it was offered and I made a strong commitment to make it work.

"Once I started uni, I quickly realised that there was so much more to life than what I had been doing. I was studying health, social science and politics.

"Charles Sturt's course was set up for people like me; busy people, who aren't just studying. It feels like Charles Sturt University is for people who need to go to university on their own terms. I loved online study; I just logged in and did my work. When I felt like I needed more assistance, I chatted to other people in my course or I applied for extra help from the support and academic staff. Studying online was really easy.

"After graduation, I found a wonderful and fulfilling job working for a day program in the disability services. I saw the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and had the greatest of experiences working on lifestyle and leisure, outreach and employment programs. I now work as a diversional therapist on an incredible program that sees older people who have been living in psychiatric hospitals on a long-term basis transition into mainstream aged care.

"I am blown away by what we do daily and I'm so proud. I have a clinical registration and go to work every day, knowing that I have made a difference. I could never have dreamed that I would love something so much. I am so glad that I changed careers."

## Stay connected

At Charles Sturt University, study support isn't an add on; it's part of your experience. Whenever you need support on your study journey, we'll be there. You can reach out online, over the phone or in person on any of our campuses.

### Study Link

Build your skills before you start your degree with Charles Sturt University's Study Link subjects. Guided by a coordinator, you can get up to speed with everything from stats and maths to essay writing and anatomy. What's more, Study Link subjects are free for most Australian citizens.

Helen Barnett returned to university after "a really long break". She found Study Link helped her adapt to the university study environment.

"The advantage of the Study Link subjects for me was that I got to learn the online space before I started back at uni. I was also having a change of career, coming from an arts background and going into a science course. So the Study Link subjects that I did in maths and chemistry gave me some grounding in the subjects that I was going to be doing in my university course. That gave me a bit of confidence going into the degree."

### Study support

We have dedicated online learning advisers available every day until 7pm. You can reach them by phone, email, Skype or online chat. Our Study Skills team is here to help you with the nuts and bolts of study – from researching topics through writing assignments to referencing papers. You can talk to a study adviser one-to-one online or over the phone, and access web resources around the clock.

### Childcare and parent rooms

Whether you're are studying on campus, visiting for a residential school, or just coming to use the library, you are more than welcome to bring your kids. We have dedicated parent rooms on all our campuses where you can relax, change, feed and play with your child. Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga campuses also have very reasonably priced child care centres.

### Health and wellbeing

Need to chat something through? Reach out to our health and wellbeing team. Join our Ally network for LGBTIQ+ students and staff. Speak to a counsellor for help for everything from dealing with stress and time management to exam anxiety. Get spiritual and cultural support through our advice teams, and at our First Nations centres on campus.

### Career advice

From preparing your career change résumé to interview advice for entering a new industry, our careers team is on hand to help you make the transition from student to professional in your new career.

→ [study.csu.edu.au/get-support](https://study.csu.edu.au/get-support)



## From electrician to paralegal: Hamish's story

Hamish McCormack was an electrician. But after working his trade for several years, as he approached 30, he knew he needed to make a switch and started looking for a change of career.

"I was getting a bit fed up with my trade. I wasn't really enjoying what I was doing, so I started to look for other opportunities. And you have to think about the future. You can't go crawling through people's roofs for the rest of your life. I had been unhappy for six months, so I spoke to some friends and their advice was to find something I was interested in and just go and do it. I was lucky enough to be at a good stage of my life because I hadn't had kids yet, so I was able to have a go at something new."

Hamish chose law and came to Charles Sturt University in Port Macquarie to start his career change. And he secured a job in his new profession before he had even graduated.

"It was a bit of a shock to the system. I went from doing my trade – which I knew pretty well after a decade – to starting brand new in something else. It made me second guess myself at the beginning. But by the end of my first year of study I got into the swing of things.

"Learning to ask for help was probably my biggest problem. I was pretty confident in my trade and then I found myself having to ask people for help or a bit of direction. But the other students helped me work through that. Speaking with them about what they were experiencing and what helped them get through their subjects was great."

"I had a bit of a look around my town, to get a feel for who was doing what, and I found a company that had opened a new office. It was construction and infrastructure based – which is my whole trade. So, I contacted the director and after the interview he offered me a role as a paralegal. I hadn't even got my degree yet!"

# Financing your career change

Getting a qualification to help you change career doesn't come for free, alas. But there are ways of making it more affordable.

## Government schemes

You can access government schemes to help pay for your course, that you pay back through the tax system when you earn a certain amount. There are two schemes linked to the type of study place you get.

- A Commonwealth supported place – otherwise known as a CSP – sees the federal government pays a proportion of your course fees. You pay the rest, known as, you guessed it, the student contribution. You can choose to pay your contribution upfront, or apply for a HECS-HELP loan. This is a government scheme that offers a low-interest loan that you begin to pay back when you earn over a certain salary. Most undergraduate courses have CSPs, as well as some postgraduate degrees.
- A full fee-paying place means that while the government won't pay any of your fees, they do offer low-interest loans to cover some or all of the cost. You only start paying the loan back when you reach a certain level of employment income. The program is called FEE-HELP and your loan is recorded with the Australian Taxation Office and your repayments are automatically applied through the tax system when your earnings hit a certain level. Most postgraduate places are full fee-paying.

## Get advice

You can speak to the dedicated Charles Sturt University financial team to get advice and info on everything finance. We can help you apply for scholarships, as well as government schemes like FEE-HELP, and grants for specific aspects of your study, like attending work placements.

→ [study.csu.edu.au/get-support](https://study.csu.edu.au/get-support)

## Savings

You've worked hard and put money aside; wouldn't making yourself happier in your professional life be a good use for those savings? But only if you can afford to; no point getting into difficulty to fund your studies. Fortunately, there are other ways.

## Scholarships

You're investing in your future, and at Charles Sturt University we want to help you make it count. We offer more than \$5m in scholarships and grants that can make getting qualified that bit easier. A Charles Sturt scholarship can help cover costs like textbooks, travel and attending work placements. There are dedicated scholarships for all types of students, and you could be eligible to apply for more than one.

## Alumni discount

If you're a Charles Sturt University alumni, you can benefit from a 10 per cent discount on any future courses. So come back to your alma mater to make your career change happen.



# Scholarship helps a single parent change career: Iain's story

At 42, Iain Wood, a single father of three, left his career in law enforcement to study a Bachelor of Education (K-12).

"I spent six years with the Australian Federal Police and then another six years with the NSW Police Force. The challenge of leaving the police force and transitioning to civilian life has been a struggle at times, and a big adjustment. And being a divorced father of three children and changing careers, the challenge of returning to study as a mature-age student was extremely daunting."

"Walking onto campus during Orientation as a mature-age student I had enormous doubts and anxiety as to whether, firstly, I could learn again, and secondly, whether I would fit in. The welcome by the staff and student body, as well as the student services team, helped ease my nerves. And once the lectures and tutorials commenced, the support from the academics was fantastic."

Iain was also eligible for a \$3,000 Bathurst Teachers' College Alumni Scholarship. As the successful recipient, he was extremely grateful for the boost this scholarship offered.

"Having the financial support of this scholarship has had a flow-on effect. My current costs of living and raising my family can be met more effectively with my current income. Without this scholarship I would have found it very hard to adjust my budget to be able to afford learning materials as well as day-to-day necessities."

Scholarships have all sorts of criteria and there are so many that you may qualify for. Remember, we have \$5 million available. So Iain's advice? "Do it, just apply."

"There are so many scholarships that may be applicable. I suggest grabbing a coffee, sitting down and browsing through the Charles Sturt University scholarships on offer. The search tools on the scholarship page are helpful in narrowing down which ones you may be eligible for and the application process is easy to follow. The link took me to the relevant page and the instructions and checklist were clear. I was able to save my progress and return to edit or complete more details prior to the final submission."

## Next steps

Chat to one of our university consultants

→ [study.csu.edu.au/contact-us](https://study.csu.edu.au/contact-us)

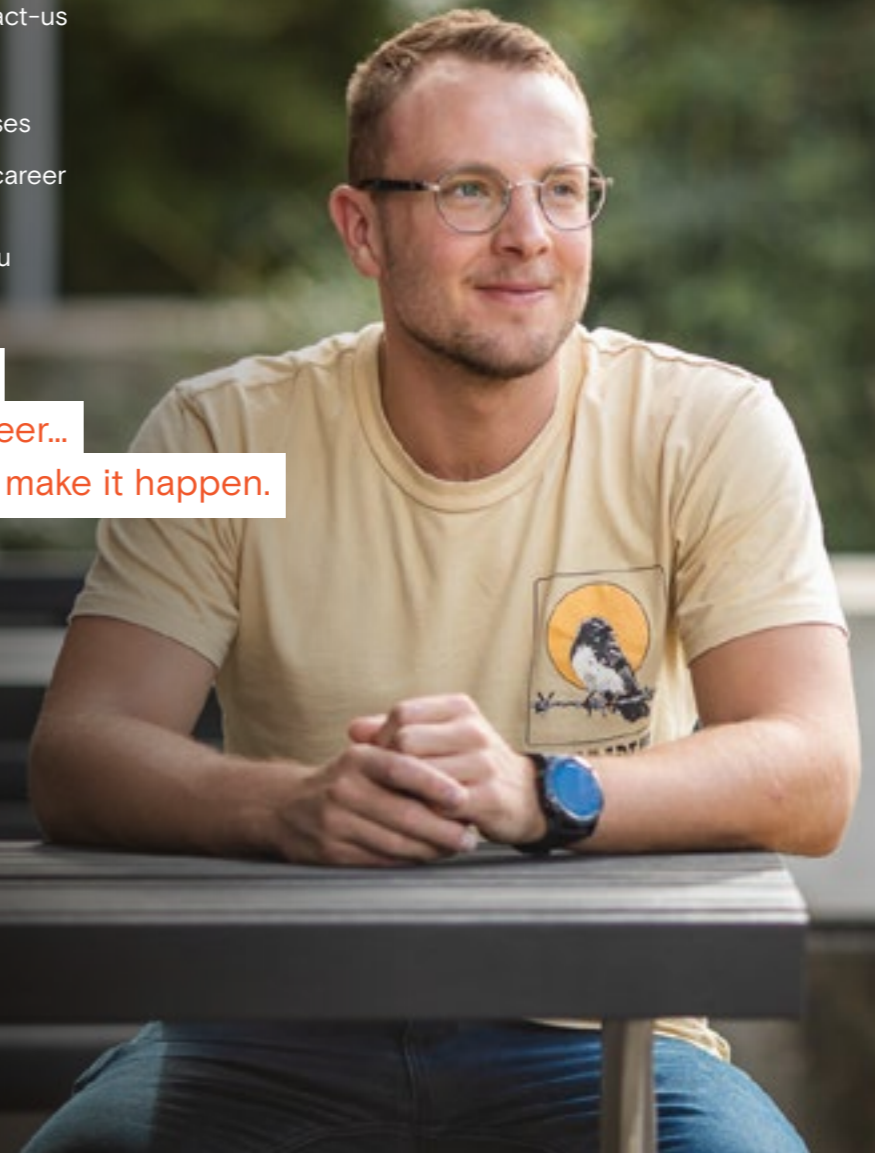
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Get more info on all things career change and uni on Insight

→ [insight.study.csu.edu.au](https://insight.study.csu.edu.au)

When you're ready to change your career... we're ready to help make it happen.







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