



## Job searching

Finding your first job as a graduate can be exciting, daunting and sometimes quite frustrating. However, if you have a clear job-search strategy it will improve your chances of employment success.

There are three common pathways to secure a job:

- **Advertised jobs (the published job market)** – most employers advertise current vacancies on employment or industry websites, social media platforms or (decreasingly) in print media such as newspapers. These jobs may be advertised by employers themselves or by recruitment agencies acting on behalf of an employer.
- **Unadvertised jobs (the hidden job market)** – up to 60% of jobs are filled without being advertised at all. You may find a hidden job through effective networking or by directly approaching employers.
- **Graduate employment programs** – many large companies and government agencies have an annual recruitment intake specifically targeting graduates. Graduates employed under these programs undertake structured mentoring and professional development over 1-2 years and are often rotated through different areas of the business.

## Before you apply

Some people apply for everything and anything in the general industry they are interested in. However, you will achieve better results, waste less time and find more satisfying employment if you properly research the type of role that best suits you (in terms of your skills, level of experience and genuine interests). Here are some ways to narrow down your job search:

### Consult lecturers

Most academic staff have professional backgrounds and contacts in their industry. Talk to them about the type of roles available and the organisations that have hired graduates and CSU alumni in the past. Work placement supervisors are another good source of information and advice.

### Research your target industry

Start getting a feel for the current job market by researching employment websites (see next page). This will give you an insight into where the opportunities lie, the type of jobs available and what qualifications, skills and experience are required. You can investigate prospective employers through professional association websites and publications, and by attending career fairs / campus information sessions.

- ☑ To locate potential employers online, type the following into the search bar:  
<title of industry / profession> site.com.au (or site.org.au)

### Informational interview

Try setting up an informational interview with someone who works in a role / organisation that interests you. You may gain firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working in that industry, insight into career paths that you did not know existed and insider information about how to land your first career position. Find these contacts through personal networks (friends, family, tutors, alumni etc) or via your research (see above). Make a formal meeting request by phone or email, clearly explaining your purpose is to simply find out more information (not hit them up for a job straight away). If they accept, keep your interview short and informal (they may be busy), prepare a list of questions and remain professional at all times as it may lead to valuable networking opportunities (see below).

## Be resume ready

Once you have pinpointed the type of role you wish to target you need to have your resume ready to go. You should tailor your resume and cover letter for each specific job vacancy but having a basic template prepared will ensure you have plenty of time to complete a high-quality application before the closing date.

## Start your search

According to Australian Government employment service Jobactive, almost half of all jobs are advertised on the internet and 18 per cent are advertised in newspapers (though this is declining and many of these jobs are also advertised online). About one-third of vacancies are not advertised at all (in regional areas this rises to almost half), with employers relying on word of mouth or job seekers approaching them directly.

What does this mean for you? For best results you need to use a variety of job-search techniques, including:

### Applying for advertised jobs

The majority of advertised jobs can be found online via:

- Large commercial employment websites that cover a wide range of industries and professions, such as seek.com.au, au.indeed.com or jobsearch.gov.au (to find these sites, try searching *job boards site.au*)
- Recruitment agency websites, which sometimes specialise in particular industries (e.g. try searching *IT recruitment agency site.au*)
- Company/organisation websites or social media platforms (such as Facebook and LinkedIn)
- Industry or professional association websites
- A combination of all of the above. For instance, government jobs are often advertised on commercial employment websites as well as public service job boards such as iworkforNSW.nsw.gov.au or apsjobs.gov.au

Where possible, set up a job-search profile to send you email alerts about suitable jobs. Be specific about things you aren't flexible on (e.g. location) but remember that job titles can vary so try to use a few different search terms (this is where your previous research will help).

One way to capture similar jobs in your search results is to use OR (e.g. search *marketing OR advertising* to find jobs with either of these terms). To narrow your search, use AND (e.g. *graphic design AND digital* to only find jobs with both these terms) or NOT (e.g. *programming NOT help desk*). To avoid jobs that are too senior, add *graduate OR entry-level*.

- Don't forget to check the CSU job board for a wide range of graduate and entry-level opportunities.*

### Applying for graduate programs

Many companies and government agencies offer formal graduate programs that include competitive salaries, training, mentoring and rotations within key business areas. Recruitment generally begins early in your final year of study and is advertised via the employer's own website, campus presentations, careers fairs, graduate publications and specialist websites such as gradaustralia.com.au, graduateopportunities.com or gradconnection.com.au.

### Networking

Networking is one way to tap into the hidden job market and involves getting to know people already working in your target industry. Expand your network by joining professional associations, attending conferences and industry functions, or undertaking voluntary work or workplace learning. You can also set up a LinkedIn profile and get connected with potential employers and industries. Once you have established a good rapport with a relevant contact, let them know you are actively seeking work and maintain regular contact with them (without harassing them) so you are top of mind when opportunities arise.

- You should ask a networking contact's permission before connecting with them on social media.*

### Directly approaching employers

If you have a clear idea about a company you'd like to work for but they don't appear to have any advertised vacancies, you can try a speculative application. First, find out everything you can about the organisation via their web site, annual report and online news databases. Next, prepare a tailored cover letter and resume that demonstrates you understand the organisation and can offer the type of skills they require. Find out exactly who to send your application to and follow up with a phone call a week or two afterwards to show you are motivated and keen. If they don't have any vacancies, find out if they will keep your application on file and keep in regular contact with them. Persistence sometimes pays off!

### Extra hints

- Set realistic expectations – even with a degree you may need to take an entry-level role and work your way up.
- Start researching potential jobs as early as possible to identify any gaps in your experience or skills.
- Consider undertaking additional voluntary workplace learning – it can open doors that you never knew were there!

## **Need further help?**

Get in touch with CSU's Career Development Service for support with job searching and job applications.

<http://student.csu.edu.au/careers>