

University Pathway

Post graduate employment

INCREASING THE CHANCE OF GAINING GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT AFTER UNI

Interested in going to university? It's important you are aware that around 30 per cent of university graduates are without full-time employment within four months of graduation.

The following article appears on the Australian Careers Service website and has been adapted for the Weekly Career News, <http://bit.ly/2zz56h5>

"The 2018 edition of The Good Universities Guide reveals that while universities around the country are providing a high-quality experience for students, it's not translating to graduate jobs.

Analysis from The Good Universities Guide, shows that across many courses and fields of study, Australian university students are overwhelmingly enjoying and excelling during their time at university.

Across all Australian universities the results for the six key measures of Student Experience – Learning Resources, Learner Engagement, Student Support, Skills Development, Teaching Quality and Overall Experience – are all strong.

But, the news isn't so rosy once students attempt to enter the workforce. When it comes to life after university, the employment outcomes are not as positive.

The Good Universities Guide graduate outcome data shows that across the country, Australian university graduates struggle to secure a job and earn a reasonable salary, with around 30 per cent of graduates without full-time employment within four months of graduation.

The Guide can also reveal that the average salary for graduates employed full-time is \$56,000 – the same post-graduation income vocational graduates achieve, according to figures published by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research".

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So what does this mean for students currently in high school? The good news is that some fields of study have better graduate outcomes (e.g., health and rehabilitation). The bad news is that some fields are harder to secure graduate employment.

What can you do to increase your chances of graduate employment? It starts with you in high school. It is critical that you develop skills in how to a) manage your career journey and also b) develop skills and attributes that are desirable to employers.

The following are tips to consider

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN HIGH SCHOOL

Tip 1) Build your resume through participating in career development activities. For example:

- Secure casual or part time employment
- Volunteer for community programs such as the Country Fire Authority, Young Lions, Scouts, Defence Force Cadets, St Johns Ambulance Cadets, State Emergency Service etc.
- Play sport
- Participate in leadership and community service activities at school
- Participate in community based fundraising activities.
- Complete an overseas exchange program
- Participate in a leadership program such as The Young Endeavour

Tip 2) meet with your Career Adviser regularly

The more you meet with me, the better I will know you and the better advice I will be able to give. Start in the junior years and work together in partnership with your family through regular meetings with me until you exit school.

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Tip 3: Plan your university program carefully.

Studying at university isn't cheap. Aside from the course costs, you will need to invest in textbooks, printing credit, transport, a computer, Internet data, and for students who have to move away to study, you will be investing roughly \$20 000 - \$30 000 per year on accommodation and living expenses.

For courses that have a lot of unpaid work placement requirements, it will be difficult to maintain consistent employment and thus, consistent income. Some courses will require you to be at university for 5 – 6 years, which will place a greater strain on you financially.

It's important that you plan out what you would like to study carefully to start with and then to find an undergraduate degree that is going to give you the best chance of graduate employment.

The first step is to identify what you would like to study. Remember, that in a time of rapid change with the world of work and technology, the occupations you can imagine yourself doing now may not exist in 5 – 6 years time, or there may be new ones you would be suited to.

I will be able to assist you to explore courses based on your interests. There are many courses available and ones that you may not have considered yet.

Once you have identified the type of course you would like to study, you will then need to find the right undergraduate degree at the right university.

Look for courses that offer work experience, career development programs, overseas exchange opportunities, and (if relevant) are accredited.

Example 1

For example, if you want to study a degree like the Bachelor of Criminology think carefully. There are many criminology degrees in Victoria, Canberra and NSW and this means there will be many graduates. How can you be competitive for graduate jobs?

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Consider the following option:

Combine the degree with another field of study that has strong graduate employment outcomes such as cybersecurity and Asian languages. The following are courses to consider:

- **Deakin University:** Bachelor of Cybersecurity/Bachelor of Criminology, <http://bit.ly/2n1viHZ>
- **Australia National University:** Bachelor of Criminology/Bachelor of Asian Studies (majoring in an Asian language), <http://bit.ly/2h9laLj>

Example 2

You would like to study a course focussed on marketing. This is a very popular course for people to study, so what will make you stand out? Choose a course that will give you substantial industry experience.

You could consider the following options:

- **Swinburne University:** Bachelor of Business (Professional) with a major in marketing. You will be guaranteed a year of paid industry experience, <http://bit.ly/2AjXf3T>
- **RMIT:** Bachelor of Business (Marketing) (Applied). You can undertake a year of industry experience, <http://bit.ly/2zhCyYB>

Develop a plan with your career adviser and attend university open days and experience days throughout the year.

Tip 4: Consider taking a gap year

During this year you could undertake a 12-month traineeship in the industry you are interested in or complete a Certificate IV or Diploma level course.

This will give you 12-months to mature, save money, gain experience in the industry you are interested in, and give you time to consider if you are happy with the course you have deferred.

Employers also love VET qualifications and industry experience, so this year could boost your graduate employment chances.

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Example 1: Amy would like to study a law degree. She is aware that more law graduates are being produced than ever before and that this may place pressure on the job market. She decides to complete a traineeship in legal administration in a law firm during her gap year.

Example 2: Steve would like to be a secondary teacher. He knows that supporting diverse learners in the classroom will be an important element of his future job. He also knows that based on the teaching speciality he goes into, he may find it difficult to gain graduate employment. He decides to complete a Certificate IV in Disability Studies during his gap year at his local TAFE.

Example 3: Sarah would like to study a degree focussed on rehabilitation but isn't sure what course she would be suited to. She receives an offer for Occupational Therapy, but to give herself more time to be sure of her course choice, she decides to complete the Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance at TAFE. She knows that this course will provide her with a qualification, which will enable her to work as an allied health assistant whilst she is at university.

Example 4: Will would like to join the Police Force but is aware that he may not be competitive with a Year 12 qualification and little life experience. He decides to apply for the Airbase Security Gap Year program in the Air Force. During this year he will undertake combat training, weapons instruction, dog handling, bomb disposal and simulated terror attacks. This will give him more time to consider his future direction and may open up other career opportunities for him if he doesn't receive a place in the Police Force.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT UNI

You can increase your chances of gaining graduate employment through the following tips:

Tip 1: Meet with the Career Adviser at uni

Did you know that only 30% of students meet with a Career Adviser at Uni? It's advisable to set up regular meetings to discuss career development opportunities, ways to gain industry experience and to assist you with applying for graduate employment.

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Tip 2) Build your resume through participating in career development activities. For example:

- Secure casual or part time employment
- Volunteer for community programs
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- Participate in community based fundraising activities.
- Complete an overseas exchange program
- Participate in a leadership programs

What to do next: If you're still reading this – great! It means that you are at least thinking about your career pathways. Make a time to meet me and set some short and long term career development goals. Now is the perfect time heading into a new year level.