



Australian Government



National Skills Commission

TRANSITIONING FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORK

Improving your chances in the labour market

The Australian labour market is competitive. With increasing numbers of university graduates, competition for graduate and entry-level positions is increasing. In fact, between 2009 and 2018, the number of domestic undergraduate completers increased by over 35,000.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a substantial negative impact on the labour market. With many jobs lost and fewer entry level roles on offer, it is even more competitive and is likely to lead to fewer available positions in your field of study – at least in the short term. However, you can improve your chances by understanding what employers are looking for, where to find work, and how to apply.

Employers want more than a degree

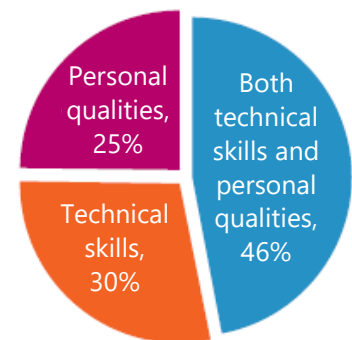
Employers want the whole package. While this is true for all jobs, employers recruiting for higher skilled jobs are more likely to place equal importance on technical skills and personal qualities (46 per cent compared with 37 per cent for all occupations).

What does this mean? You need to be able to demonstrate both your employability skills, such as teamwork and interpersonal skills, and technical skills when applying for jobs.

Employers also place a lot of importance on relevant work experience - indeed, 81 per cent of employers view this as essential. How can you get experience? Look out for internships, work experience opportunities and programs offered by your university.

Employers are increasingly searching for workers who are problem solvers and critical thinkers with good communication skills. Practical experience and industry exposure will help you build these skills.

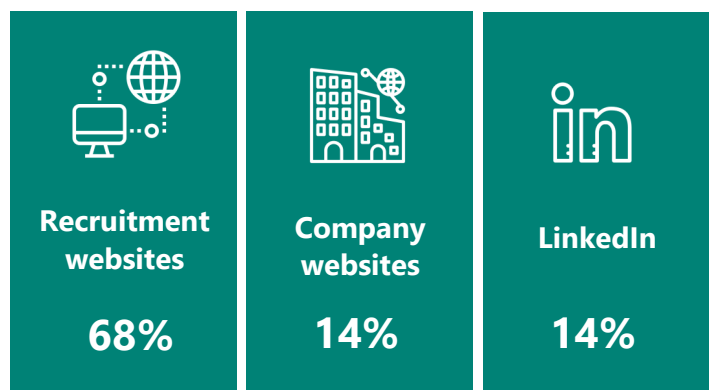
Employers told us...



Most vacancies are advertised on the internet

Knowing where to look for a job is also important. Most vacancies for higher skilled jobs are advertised on recruitment websites (68 per cent). Many vacancies are also advertised through company websites (14 per cent), and there are also websites just for graduates, such as *GradConnection* and *gradaustralia*, so be sure to include these in your job search.

LinkedIn is also a commonly used platform for advertising jobs (14 per cent), so it may be worthwhile including this in your job search strategy and keeping your *LinkedIn* profile up to date.



Note: Employers can select more than one method of recruitment.

Your application needs to stand out

- ⇒ Read the job advertisement carefully, and look at the employers' website to find out more about what they do, their values and anything else relevant to include in your application.
- ⇒ Ensure your application addresses any selection criteria clearly and comprehensively.
- ⇒ Provide well-structured examples of your skills in your application and interviews - the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action and Result) can help you do this. See the *Find a Job* blog for help with the STAR method: <https://findajob.blog/2020/03/23/star-method-job-applications/>
- ⇒ Double and triple-check your résumé and application for any spelling or grammatical errors.

Be ready to apply online

Employers constantly adopt new technologies when looking for workers, and even more so as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many employers will scan your online presence, so tidy up your digital profile. These days, employers will also use software to scan résumés to shortlist candidates who match their needs.

If you apply online, make sure to read instructions carefully so you don't miss any steps. Also make your résumé software friendly by using a simple format and clearly addressing any selection criteria and required skills.

More employers are also conducting interviews virtually. If you are asked to attend a virtual interview, you should consider three things: location, technology and appearance.

- ⇒ If you can, find a quiet location with a plain background and good lighting, away from any possible interruptions or distractions.
- ⇒ Before the interview, test your technology to make sure that it is working, including your internet connection, audio and webcam.
- ⇒ Dress professionally for video interviews to make a positive first impression. A good rule is to dress as you would for an interview in-person.



Some final advice...

Build your networks

- ⇒ While studying, take the opportunity to build professional networks and connect with employers.
- ⇒ Many jobs are not advertised, so let others know you are looking for work as they may be able to inform you of opportunities.

Understand and develop your skills

- ⇒ Understanding what skills you have is important and allows you to communicate them effectively to employers, and also identify what skills you can develop further.
- ⇒ Gaining work experience will help you develop both your employability and technical skills.

Highlight your digital skills

- ⇒ Employers want candidates who are able to adapt to new technologies and have high levels of digital literacy.
- ⇒ Many businesses have adopted new approaches such as working from home and virtual meetings. Be prepared to demonstrate and provide examples of your ability to work remotely.

Finish your degree!

- ⇒ While there is uncertainty in the labour market, it is more important than ever to finish your degree.
- ⇒ The labour market will be more competitive following COVID-19. Having the right skills and qualifications will boost your chances of finding work.

Find more information on Job Outlook

- ⇒ [Skills Match](#) on Job Outlook can help you research careers and identify the skills you have gained from past jobs.



For more information about this resource, please email employmentpathwaysanalysis@skillscommission.gov.au or visit the Labour Market Information Portal at lmip.gov.au

Note: recruitment methods and skills and experience requirements data are based on analysis of ANZSCO Skill Level 1 occupations.

Sources: National Skills Commission, *Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, 2019*; Department of Education, Skills and Employment, *uCube, 2019*; Deakin University, *Australian International Graduates and the Transition to Employment, 2014*.