

# WORK EXPERIENCE

Students who engage in work experience are able to apply theory learned in their studies and develop an understanding of their suitability for the work. Other advantages of gaining work experience as a student are:

- practice in making job applications and presenting at interviews
- opportunity to preview a job or organisation
- networking opportunities in the industry
- increased professional self-confidence.

Employers acknowledge that graduates who have gained industry relevant experience often have an edge in recruitment. Many larger employers use such programs to “try before they buy”, seeking good potential recruits well before graduation.

## Types of Work Experience

- Vacation work: usually paid, often a requirement of your degree and taken on at the end of your second last year of study for up to 12 weeks.
- Cooperative education: a full time year of paid industry based learning, generally taken as the third year of a 4-year degree. It usually gains credit points and is a requirement of the degree.

## –Sponsored opportunities:

- Cadetships: paid employment while the student is studying, including financial support to complete studies. The student may work full time during the vacation and part-time during semester.
- Internships—a period of supervised employment which has specific learning objectives. It may be paid or unpaid, full time during vacation periods or part-time during semester.

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– Scholarships: financial grants provided by government, industry or private organisations. Relevant work experience with the sponsoring organisation is often part of the scholarship

## Where to Find Placements

Work experience that is an integral part of a course of study is often arranged by your academic school. Examples may be nursing, teaching, medical science and social work. In other fields, a staff member may liaise with industry and advertise vacancies to students.

Organisations that use work experience as part of their graduate recruitment strategy have formal programs and advertise them to students, check:

- on the websites of large companies and government departments
- in Graduate Opportunities and Undergraduate Opportunities [www.graduateopportunities.com](http://www.graduateopportunities.com) and Unigrad [www.unigrad.com.au](http://www.unigrad.com.au), guides published annually and online

## Finding Your Own Work Placement

Often, it is up to the student to find their own work experience and this can be seen as good practice for the world of work, see:

- [www.careerone.com.au](http://www.careerone.com.au)
- [www.mycareer.com.au](http://www.mycareer.com.au)
- [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au)

Use your networks. People you know may be useful sources of information on available jobs. Start with your lecturers, tutors and later year fellow students. LinkedIn can also be useful for connecting with employers and forming networks. [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)