

OPPORTUNITY SCOPING

A sustainable career decision should involve informed choice rather than solely a 'gut feeling' or picking an option by default. It should include a systematic, objective review of career and labour market information. It is recommended that you research two or three appealing career ideas as we generally make better choices when we weigh up pros and cons of multiple options. A JCU Career Counsellor is available on campus to discuss the results, if needed.

Online career resources

There is a number of excellent online resources that will help you get basic objective facts about qualifications, career paths, skills, jobs and salaries.

- **Job Outlook:** labour market information including expected employment growth, average weekly earnings, skills needed to perform work tasks and typical work activities.
- **Myfuture:** information on numerous careers and the course and training options available (registration is free).
- **The Good Universities Guide:** information on 450 occupations, including core duties of the job, personal requirements, education and training requirements and employment opportunities.
- **QILT** (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching): this site provides graduate employment outcome data for all Australian university degree programs.
- **GradAustralia:** information on graduate employers, jobs, internships, graduate programs and industry advice.
 - Business Career Guide – [JCU e-Book](#)
 - Law Career Guide – [JCU e-Book](#)
 - STEM Career Guide – [JCU e-Book](#)
- **Seek:** By searching current job vacancies on this major Australian employment site you are able to identify current demand areas and the scope of roles available in your area of interest.

Seek has a Career Advice section that allows you to explore advice and career options that are tailored to you.
- **GradConnection:** a job board covering internships and graduate positions, a jobs calendar, "ask employers questions", and a facility to filter employers against cultural diversity, disability programs, gender equity etc.

- **Labour Market Information Portal:** Australian Government's labour market information, including jobactive data, employment by industry and occupation, unemployment rates, monthly job vacancies and employment projections.
- **Skills Shortages:** skills shortages in the Australian labour market at state/territory and national levels.
- **JCU Career Snapshots:** a concise summary of possible career paths for each JCU degree.

Find practitioners to interview

To avoid disappointment down the track, we recommend you have a conversation with a number of individuals already in the profession/s that you are considering. These conversations can help you compare invaluable objective and subjective insights that only come with experience.

Find contacts in the following ways:

- **Family/friends networks** – ask close associates if they know someone who works in the professions and industries you want to find out more about.
- **LinkedIn** – a professional database and social media site covering over 600 million people worldwide and over 9 million in Australia. Look up professions/job titles, industries, employees of organisations of interest, or JCU Alumni who have completed the degree you are considering. JCU Alumni are more likely to connect with you and answer your questions. You can also use the [Career Advice](#) function on LinkedIn where you pose a question and LinkedIn will notify professionals who have opted in to give advice. You will need to create a free profile to use [LinkedIn](#).
- **Yellow Pages** – some professions in your area are listed in the yellow pages e.g. physiotherapists.
- **Professional organisations:** google 'professional organisation [insert name of the profession] Australia' to find them. Each professional organisation will be different. Some will have a career advice function on their website, in others you might need to use the 'contact us' function and ask if they have a careers contact.

Sample questions to ask

You could ask the same set of questions to all of them and compare their answers. Sample questions could include:

- What are the opportunities in your career field?
- What qualifications do you have? What qualifications do other staff members here have?
- Is there any special training or education that you would recommend to get into this occupation?
- What should I do during my studies, other than getting good academic results, to get best start in the profession?
- Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself when you were a student?
- What do you like about working in this occupation?
- What do you dislike about working in this occupation?
- What do you do in a typical workday?
- What are the progression/promotion opportunities?
- What are the attitudes towards professional development?
- Is there someone else you think I should speak to?

Practical insights and observations

An essential part of an informed career choice is a practical experience that is as close as possible to the 'real job'. It should be followed up with your reflection on how it made you feel and any further questions that you could discuss with your contacts. Examples include a school visit or taking up a teaching assistant job (for example at your old high school) - if you are considering a teaching career, shadowing (spending a day or part thereof observing a professional at work), or volunteering.

How to source opportunities for practical insights:

- Ask your lecturers, tutors, placement officers for suggestions and referrals.
- Ask your family network – you are likely to have someone who knows someone relevant in your extended family and their contacts network.
- Ask the professionals you have spoken to for a referral to another professional in their network.
- Connect directly with a JCU Alumnus or Alumna on LinkedIn and ask them after some message exchanges.
- Contact the [JCU Alumni office](#) and ask for introductions.
- Check the list of volunteering organisations on the [JCU Careers and Employability website](#)

Reflect on findings

- What were the key tasks performed? Would I like/enjoy performing them?
- What skills, personal attributes and values are helpful in this type of profession?
- Do I already have some of the skills? Which ones?
- What would I need to catch up on? Can I learn them? Would it be fun?
- What was the feeling of the place like? Would I feel comfortable in it?
- What is the organisational culture like and does it suit me: relaxed or formal, the work attire, the human relationships, hierarchy, facilities, as well as the amount of trust, support, supervision, pressure/ stress, paperwork, legal compliance?
- Did I feel comfortable in that work environment? What did I like/dislike, and why?
- Did something challenge my views, values or preferences, or made me feel uncomfortable (e.g. realising in your second year of accounting that you don't want to have an office job).
- Are there any risks to my safety or long-term mental or physical health? Can they be managed and how?
- Are there any formal requirements I might not be able to meet (e.g. extremely long and busy placements, clean bill of health and vaccinations or police clearance etc.)?

Your notes: who, what, why, when, how

