

JCU Future Students Career/Course Decision Making

Throughout our lives we all face times when we must make decisions about our next career move. At times, our next career step may be straight forward and easy to navigate and at other times it may be confusing and overwhelming.

An effective strategy is to break your decision making down into four key steps.



TIP This resource, with hyperlinks, is available at <https://www.jcu.edu.au/careers/information-sheets>

Step 1. Understand yourself

To identify what you would like to do in your life, it is recommended you consider your core values, motivations, interests, skills, strengths, and personal attributes. Knowledge of who you are and what is important to you will assist in moving your life in the direction that is right for you.

Helpful **free resources** to assist with **self-exploration** include:

- [MyFuture](#) and [My Next Move: O*Net Interest Profiler](#) offer psychometric **Interests** test to identify occupations which may match your interests, plus MyFuture offers **Skills, Knowledge and Work Conditions** quizzes which complement the Interest test outcomes and provide more context for consideration.
- [Personal Values](#) offers a test to help identify what is important to you.
- Open-source Psychometrics Project offers the [Holland Code \(RIASEC\) Test](#) and the [Big Five Personality Tests](#) to identify your occupational interests and personality traits.
- 123Test offers a [Career aptitude test](#) examining careers that potentially fit with your personality.
- [MyPlan](#) offers a free Career Values Assessment examining your underlying needs and motivations.



TIP! These resources are designed to give your ideas of careers to explore. However, there are many factors which need to be considered when determining your future career direction and a conversation with a careers counsellor to help make sense of the resource suggestions is highly recommended.

Step 2. Research opportunities

Explore opportunities online to gain an understanding of career paths, qualifications required, and study options.

Career options

- [My Future](#) provides information on careers and course and training options available.
- [Jobs and Skills Australia](#) provides current labour market information, including employment by industry and occupation, unemployment rates, monthly job vacancies, and employment projections.
- [The Good Universities Guide](#) provides information on 400 plus occupations, including core duties of the job, personal requirements, education and training requirements and employment opportunities.
- [Your Career](#) developed by the National Careers Institute connects you to education, training and work resources and support
- [Seek](#) and other job boards provide information on the range of jobs available in your area of interest. The job advertisements often list the qualifications required for the positions.
- [100 Jobs of the Future](#) reports on the future of work in an increasingly technologically driven society and identifies the jobs that will emerge in the future, and the skills and interests that are needed. It offers a **Future Job Quiz** to help you identify possible work futures for you.

Course options

- [JCU](#) provides information on all courses (Diploma, Undergraduate and Postgraduate) available at JCU including entry requirements, career opportunities, fees and scholarships, and pathways to JCU. Each **Course Handbook** provides information on the course structure, along with detailed descriptions for all subjects.

- [Course Seeker](#) provides information on thousands of on-campus and online undergraduate courses across Australia.
- [QTAC](#) Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre or other [Interstate Tertiary Admission Centres](#) provide information on all tertiary courses within the relevant states and territories.
- [The Good Universities Guide](#) provides information on courses available at Australian universities, TAFE, and private training colleges.

Course experience and outcomes

- [ComparED](#) provides information on graduate employment outcomes, median starting salaries and ratings of teaching practices, resources, and support services, by institution and study area.
- [LinkedIn](#) allows registered members to view the careers paths of graduates in your fields of interest. Check the **Alumni** (graduate students) section on the LinkedIn page of your university of interest (e.g. [James Cook University LinkedIn](#)) to research the career paths of graduates. Registration on LinkedIn is free.

Cost and financial assistance

- [JCU Fees and Financial Support](#) provides information on fees and how to pay or defer them.
- [Study Assist](#) provides information on government assistance for financing tertiary study.

Step 3. Narrow and test your ideas

Explore these ideas in more detail by:

- Reading the course information of degrees of interest. In particular, the course overview and subject descriptions. You need to be clear on what is covered in the differing courses to ensure the content plays to your interests and strengths.
- Talking to people already working in the career or studying the course you are considering.
- Undertaking a short course such as a MOOC to trial an academic area in a non-threatening way before you commit to university study. A useful resource is [Class Central](#).
- Gaining experience or observing the career you are interested in through work experience, job shadowing or volunteering.

Step 4. Decide

Decisions may be made intuitively, rationally, or through a combination of these thought processes.

An effective strategy is to list the **pros (advantages)** and **cons (disadvantages)** for each of your ideas to clarify which option best suits what you know about yourself, and what is important to you.

If you are still not clear, then weigh the importance of each pro and con on a scale of **1 (not that important) to 5 (very important)** to clarify the really important considerations affecting your consideration. Add up the scores to see which option comes out stronger.

While self-reflection and opportunity scoping provide you with important information to assist with your decision making, it is impossible to know everything about career and course realities. At some point, you will need to decide and then test if it is the best fit for you.

How JCU Careers and Employability can assist

[JCU Careers and Employability](#) supports prospective JCU students with career and course decision making. Support includes:

- Appointments (Zoom, phone or in person) with a JCU Career Development Advisor to discuss your ideas. Call Careers and Employability phone 1800 246 446 (option 5) to book an appointment.
- JCU discipline-specific [Career Snapshots](#) detailing graduate opportunities.
- JCU Employability Edge [You and Your Career](#) module, to assist your career decision making.

For assistance with enquiries relating to application processes, entry requirements, pathways into university, subject selection, credit for previous study and fees and financial support, please contact the [JCU Student Centre](#) phone 1800 246 446 or email enquiries@jcu.edu.au