

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Engage

In today's crowded employment market, how do you stand out from the crowd? The key is to start early – **start now**.

Engage in activities outside your studies.

- Consider **community work** – this can be a win-win situation. You can provide your time, efforts and current skills to a community organisation. In return you will gain new skills, meet new people from a variety of backgrounds and have a great experience to add to your resume.

TIP: *Ensure you have the time to devote to any opportunity before you commit to it. You want to make a good impression but need to be realistic too.*

Make the most of the **opportunities** offered by your course.

- At JCU this could be:
 - Clinical Placements
 - Practicums
 - Fieldwork
 - Internships
 - Vacation Work
 - Volunteer Work
 - Work Integrated Learning
- The skills gained in these situations are invaluable. You will work as a “**professional in training**” so ensure you take the time to prepare for your placement to gain the most from every opportunity.
- Many placement supervisors are also willing to provide a reference.

TIP: *Check out the **JCU Career Development Program** to help you prepare for your placement. www.jcu.edu.au/careers*

Engage in networking opportunities offered by **Professional Associations** and **Student Clubs**.

- Join a relevant **Professional Association**. Ask your Lecturers and Tutors for advice on selecting a relevant organisation for your discipline. Student membership is often at a reduced cost. Attend local networking and professional development activities.
- Use **LinkedIn** to connect with professionals you meet.

- Join a **Student Club** – this is a great way to make industry contacts whilst making a contribution to professional development of your fellow students. Consider taking on a leadership role to enhance your skills.

Develop your skills

You will need to develop many skills in addition to the technical skills of your discipline in order to be successful in your chosen field. Employers value the following skills:

1. Interpersonal and communication skills
2. Cultural alignment/values fit
3. Emotional intelligence
4. Reasoning and problem solving
5. Academic results
6. Work experience
7. Technical skills
8. Demonstrated leadership
9. Extracurricular involvement
10. Community/volunteer service

Throughout your studies it is important for you to record **when** and **how** you have gained these skills – consider using an e-portfolio such as Pebblepad. **Entrepreneurial skills** are also becoming a part of many graduate roles. Employers want to know what difference you can make to their organisation. Learning to be a creative problem solver will help you to stand out.

TIP: *Use our online resource – **Developing an Enterprising Mindset** to assist you in your skill development. www.jcu.edu.au/careers*

Work out your point of difference

You never know when an opportunity will arise for you to speak with a potential employer, mentor or colleague. You will want to make a good impression, but how will you describe yourself?

- **Practice** introducing yourself – this is sometimes known as your “elevator pitch”. You need to develop a short speech outlining who you are, what you are studying and where you hope to go with your chosen career.
- If you are going to a professional development or networking event, prepare to speak to industry professionals – **research** recent articles and ask **relevant questions** related to the profession or industry.