

International students

Your guide to employment in Australia



Preparing to work in Australia

The Australian international student visa (subclass 500) allows you to work while you study. This is a great opportunity to gain work experience, build industry connections and support yourself financially.

Look for jobs that offer flexible hours to balance your study and work commitments. Part-time work, casual jobs and internships are popular with students as they provide flexibility and the chance to get industry-relevant experience.

To ensure satisfactory course progress, remember to prioritise your studies over work and ensure your work hours don't interfere with your academic performance.

Gaining work experience in Australia, either through employment or internships, is particularly important for international students who are considering staying in Australia after they graduate. Most employers offering graduate positions prefer to hire applicants with recent work history and expect to be able to contact applicants' referees to gain insights into their workplace behaviours (such as attitude, punctuality, teamwork) as well as the skills they have demonstrated.

Understand your visa conditions

It is your responsibility to understand your visa conditions. You will need to know:

- When you can begin work.
- How many hours you can work per fortnight during the trimester/semester and during holiday periods.
- Whether voluntary work is considered part of your permitted work hours.

Visit the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website to remain up to date with your visa conditions.

Apply for a Tax File Number

International students enrolled to study in Australia in a course that lasts for six months or more may be considered an Australian resident for tax purposes. Review the Australian Taxation Office's current advice about [Studying in Australia](#).

It is recommended that you apply for a Tax File Number (TFN) before starting work, or soon after starting work, to avoid paying too much tax. Visit [Tax in Australia: What you need to know](#) for more information. You can [apply online](#) for a Tax File Number.

Working conditions and pay

All employees have rights in Australian workplaces, for example rates of pay, paid or unpaid leave entitlements (e.g. sick leave, annual leave) as well as protection against discrimination and harassment. These conditions are set by the Australian Government.

Further information about workplace rights and protections for international students is available on the Australian Government's [Fair Work](#) website.

Additional requirements

Some jobs will require you to have additional certifications or qualifications such as:

- [Blue Card](#) (Working with Children Check) – required for volunteers and paid employees working with children and young people in Queensland.
- [NDIS or Disability Worker Screening Card](#) – required for many roles within NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) organisations, aged care and respite services.
- First Aid / CPR certification
- Drivers' Licence

Applying for work in Australia

[JCU Careers and Employability](#) have a range of resources available to support you with employment:

- Looking for work
- Understanding resume and cover letter expectations in Australia
- Preparing for job interviews
- Building your professional networks through LinkedIn and industry events

Build your employability while you study

Many international students plan to remain in Australia at the end of their degree. If this is your goal, it is essential to start planning early. It is highly recommended that you gain work experience while studying to increase your employability upon graduation. This might be part-time work or volunteering related or unrelated to your studies. Internships are particularly helpful in building your employability as you will have opportunities to apply the theory and skills learned through your degree and build your professional networks to open more employment possibilities.

Staying in Australia after graduation

Be aware that Australia's immigration policy is subject to change. The information provided here is for guidance only and should not be considered formal immigration advice. Migration advice is available from Registered Migration Agents who charge a fee for their services. To find an agent, see [Migration Agents Registration Authority](#).

After you complete your studies, you may be eligible for post-study work rights that can help you begin your career journey in Australia. The length of time depends on your individual visa. Other factors including your age and skills shortages across Australia can also be influencing factors. Be sure to check your eligibility the [Department of Home Affairs](#). This is an excellent source of information on how you can take advantage of the post-study work rights available to international graduates from Australian universities.

Research these other opportunities for an Australian working visa:

- [Migration Queensland](#) – Each Australian State and Territory offers migration opportunities in a range of occupations to fill skills shortages within their local labour markets.
- [Queensland University Graduates](#) – The Queensland Government provides pathways for international students who have graduated with a bachelor degree, master's degree or PhD meeting eligibility criteria to nominate for skilled work visas.
- [SkillSelect](#) – International graduates who wish to remain in Australia long term may apply for employer or State sponsorship and permanent residency through SkillSelect.

Returning home after graduation

Many international students will return to their home country at the end of their degree. Learn how to express the skills you have gained in your study abroad experience. Consider skills such as flexibility, resilience, inter-cultural communication and English fluency.

Keep in touch and grow your network by making the most of the contacts you have made while in Australia. For example, stay connected with JCU students and staff, employers through [LinkedIn](#) or [JCU Alumni](#).

