

Career decision making

Explore possibilities | Plan your next steps



Making confident career decisions starts with clarity. Whether you are considering university study, thinking about a change or responding to unexpected shifts, we all reach moments where we ask, *What's next?* These big decisions can feel exciting, daunting, or both! Sometimes the path forward is straightforward and sometimes it's unclear. One way to regain focus is to break the decision-making process into the following four steps.



Step 1: Understand yourself

Deepen your self-awareness by exploring what drives you, your values, interests, skills, strengths, personal attributes, and the work environments where you thrive. For tools to help you think critically, connect with what really matters to you and shape your career, visit [My Future](#). The "You and Your Career" module in the JCU Employability Edge program helps you to explore what impact you want to make and the factors that might influence your choices. Gain insights into your personal values by completing the [Core Values Assessment](#).



Step 2: Research possible career opportunities and the labour market

When planning your pathway, it's important to explore job opportunities, future employment prospects, qualifications and potential study options. Start by looking at the following sites:

- [Jobs and Skills Australia](#) – Current labour market information, emerging workforce skills needs and employment projections.
- [The Good Universities Guide](#) – Core duties, personal and education requirements for 400+ occupations.
- [Your Career](#) – Further resources and support.
- [JCU Snapshots](#) – Discipline specific information on possible career pathways, graduate opportunities and professional registration.
- [Course Seeker](#) – Lists all courses across Australia.



Step 3: Narrow and test your ideas

Once you have some career and study options in mind, it's time to explore your ideas more:

- Review course information. Read the course overview, subject descriptions and placement opportunities to see what aligns with your strengths and goals.
- Use [ComparED](#) to review the reported student experience ratings of differing university courses as well as graduate employment outcomes and median starting salaries.
- Connect with current students, graduates or professionals to gain real-world insights.
- Get hands-on. Try work experience, job shadowing or volunteering to test your ideas and build future opportunities through networking.



Step 4: Decide

Career decisions can be intuitive, rational, or a mix of both. Use a pros and cons list to compare your options. Highlight advantages, disadvantages and how each option aligns with your values and goals. You can also rate the importance of each pro and con on a scale of 1 to 5 to clarify your priorities and see which option stands out. Once your preferred direction starts to take shape, break your goals into manageable next steps and be open to adjustments as your career path evolves. Action builds momentum, even if the exact destination isn't perfectly defined yet.

Seek expert support from the JCU Careers and Employability Team

A conversation with a Career Advisor can help provide the clarity you need to make a decision. Current students can book a personalised appointment through our [CareerHub](#). Prospective students are welcome to book a careers chat by calling 1800 246 446 (option 5).

