



# International Students

International students may have an advantage due to the fact that they have studied in two countries and have possibly gained international work experience. However, the reality of finding work in Australia still presents a number of challenges, the most common being that Australian employers generally prefer to hire candidates who have local work experience.

This handout is written from the perspective of finding work in Australia. If you are seeking employment in your home country or elsewhere, there are other resources to consult. Please refer to the information on the Careers Centre's website for International Students.

The first step in finding appropriate work is to have a clear understanding of what you are trying to achieve by studying in Australia.

- What are your short-term objectives?
- What are your longer-term career goals?
- What type of work are you seeking e.g. casual or part-time work related to your degree, an internship or graduate roles on completion of your studies?
- What skills and qualities are you offering to employers?

## Knowing the local employment market

You must research information about your workplace rights and obligations (Workplace Authority ([www.workplaceauthority.gov.au](http://www.workplaceauthority.gov.au)), your taxation responsibilities (Australian Taxation Office [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)) and your visa conditions (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)). You will also need to find out about relevant potential employers, and the local job market, of the industry in which you wish to work. Many large employers have specific eligibility requirements for working in Australia. The Careers Centre's website provides links to relevant websites such as professional associations.

## Resume tips

- Research the resume style and content expectations of the employers and recruiters in

the country in which you seek work. A perfect fit for applying for roles in one country may not necessarily mean that it will meet the conventions of resumes in another country.

- It is hard to measure if employers appreciate overseas experience. Definitely include it on your resume, but also focus on obtaining local experience as quickly as you can.
- You will be competing for jobs with people who have local experience. Therefore think carefully about what you can offer an employer that may match or exceed the value of local experience. This will be your selling point, be sure to include it on your resume.
- Demonstrating active engagement with your local community or university can also look good on your resume, for example joining clubs and societies, community groups, travel tours, Toastmasters public speaking clubs, etc.
- Use the inbuilt Spelling and Grammar Check function in your word processing software (e.g. Microsoft Word). Don't just rely on this, as it does not detect every error. Ask a trusted friend to read over your resume, and attend a Resume Rescue workshop.

## Interview tips

- It is essential to speak clearly and confidently at interview. In some cultures it is preferable to keep the head lowered and to look down rather than maintain eye contact with people in more senior positions. In Australia this is taken as a sign of low confidence or disinterest, and is not helpful at interview. Take the time to practice before you attend an interview.
- It is common to be nervous when being interviewed, and nervousness often causes people to talk faster than they usually would. It is essential that your answers are clearly heard and understood by the interviewer. When speedy speech is combined with an accent it can be easy for an interviewer to miss many of your important points. Make a conscious effort to keep your speech at a moderate pace.

## Communication skills valued in the Australian workplace

Tick the skills you currently display with confidence. Place an asterisk against those you would like to develop further.

- Listening & comprehending
- Speaking clearly & directly
- Reading independently
- Writing to the needs of the audience
- Sharing information & proposing ideas
- Demonstrating empathy, assertiveness & tact
- Using numeracy effectively
- Understanding the needs of customers & clients
- Logically summarising information & data
- Establishing relationships & using networks
- Persuading & negotiating effectively
- Chairing meetings & taking notes
- Speaking and writing fluently in English and other languages as appropriate

## Strategies for improving your communication skills

For those skills you have marked with an asterisk in the exercise above, what action are you going to take to develop them further? Select one or more from the following suggestions:

Careers Centre's Jobs Database - gain local work experience by applying for voluntary work, casual and vacation work on the Jobs Database of the Career Centre's website.

([www.sydney.edu.au](http://www.sydney.edu.au))

Learning Centre - Workshops for English Language and Learning (W.E.L.L.).

([www.sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning\\_centre](http://www.sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning_centre))

Centre For English Teaching - Courses in General English and Academic English.

([www.sydney.edu.au/cet](http://www.sydney.edu.au/cet))

University clubs and societies - join and get actively involved in a degree-relevant student group on campus.

([http://www.usuonline.com/Clubs\\_\\_Socs/Default.aspx](http://www.usuonline.com/Clubs__Socs/Default.aspx))

Australian Discussion Groups - The Australian Discussion Groups give international students studying at the University of Sydney a chance to make friends with local students and learn about Australian

culture and way of life while increasing their self-confidence in spoken English. The groups are run by Sydney University Volunteers Association.

([www.usuonline.com/get\\_involved/volunteering/australian\\_discussion\\_groups](http://www.usuonline.com/get_involved/volunteering/australian_discussion_groups))

Community Colleges NSW - short courses in written and spoken English.

([www.cca.edu.au](http://www.cca.edu.au))

Centre for Continuing Education - short courses in Business Communication e.g. English Pronunciation for Overseas-Born Professionals

([www.cce.usyd.edu.au](http://www.cce.usyd.edu.au))

Consulates and Chamber of Commerce - These organisations can provide lists of businesses which operate both in Australia and sometimes in your country of origin, some of which may have networking, internship or other opportunities. For example, the Australian Chinese Business Council ([www.acbc.com.au/](http://www.acbc.com.au/)) and equivalent organisations can be a great introductory point for developing business contacts.

Professional Associations - join your relevant association as a student member, get involved in events and activities to gain local exposure to the industry. Many professional associations have job vacancies and other opportunities listed on their website.

([www.sydney.edu.au/careers/career\\_advice/progressing\\_career/professional\\_associations](http://www.sydney.edu.au/careers/career_advice/progressing_career/professional_associations))

## Reality check

Job seeking for international students in Australia can be very difficult. You may need to compromise your ambitions and consider contract work and entry-level positions. You may also feel you are over-qualified for some roles, but you need to gain local experience before you can be considered for some higher level roles. You will need to develop professional contacts through relevant associations, business events and networking functions to expand your opportunities.

The Careers Centre provides a range of services for students to assist you with writing your resume, preparing for job interviews, understanding the local job market and developing workplace communication strategies for the Australian job market. Please refer to website at [www.careers.usyd.edu.au](http://www.careers.usyd.edu.au) for relevant workshops, events and information. Also refer to the websites of specific organisations which have a global presence, many have recruitment opportunities targeted at international students.