

Starting your career in **Australia** Country Guide for International Students



You chose to study in the United Kingdom. You are beginning to think about what your options are after graduation. Building on an excellent international education you are returning to your home country, Australia. You stand at the beginning of an exciting career, but what are the steps you need to take in order to find a suitable job, and where do you find the information you need?

This careers profile provides you with practical advice about returning to work in Australia to help you make a successful start in your career in the Australian labour market. Included are key facts about current trends and jobs in Australian industry, advice about seeking employment in Australia, hints and tips for making a successful application, and

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Country profile

Australia has a prosperous, Western-style economy, which had been continuously expanding (until recently) for over a decade. In 2008, the country's GDP was slightly higher than that of the UK, Germany and France, at US\$842.9 billion and has grown since to around US\$870.2 billion in 2010. In recent history, the Australian economy has experienced considerable growth in the service sector, which has taken a leading role ahead of the manufacturing sector. The export of agricultural products and mineral resources also contributes significantly to the country's GDP, for example Australia is the largest net exporter of coal in the world. The absence of an export-oriented manufacturing industry has been considered a key weakness of the Australian economy, but overall there has been a small increase in exported goods since 2004. Increasing tourism and Australia's unique relationship with the Asian market have remained strong and are an important part of Australian industry.

KEY FACTS: The Australian economy

GDP real growth late 2009 - early 2010:	0.5%
GDP per capita:	US\$40,600 (2010 est.)
Labour force:	11.026 million (2010)
Unemployment rate:	4.7% (2010)
Major sectors of occupation:	Services (78%); Industry (17%); Agriculture (5%)
Main trading partners:	USA, UK, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, China, India

Whilst Australia currently has an unemployment rate of 4.7%, a transition from a decrease in full-time employment to an increase in part-time employment levels has been noted.

KEY FACTS: The Australian graduate labour market

Average age at graduation:	24
Average graduate starting salary:	US\$32,249 annually
Average working week:	Monday to Friday, approximately 37 hours (full-time)
Holiday entitlement:	20 days annual leave and 10 days public holidays

Benefits

Benefits of a UK qualification

Possibly the largest benefit which all international students receive when studying at one of the over 100 universities in the UK, is the fact that UK universities have some of the most renowned and prestigious histories of higher education in the world. Even if a graduate does not study at one of the more famous institutions, the graduate can return to their home country safe in the knowledge that no matter where they look for work, their qualifications will be highly respected.

This is also useful in job interview situations, in which your study in the UK can come into conversation as a point of interest and as an example of experience in situations of teamwork, cultural awareness, and even when you were outside of your comfort zone.

Graduating: Searching for work

Not long ago, student life and job finding was a far simpler procedure. Graduates would simply leave university, either looking for work through friends and family, a large company or a local business, and often step into a full time job after an interview. These days, a wider variety of options exist which match the wider variety of jobs and the ease of travel which is available to the worldly student. As the number of students increases, so does the quality of the competition.

It's tough out there. Many graduates having just left university know this, whilst others are soon to find out. Since so many new university leavers have a career path in mind, which they may have had for many years, the competition is fierce in many of the desirable graduate schemes. This is more the case in the UK than almost anywhere else. However, one benefit which you as the international student have is that you have a home country to which you can return. The lack of vacancies in the UK has led to many British students leaving for work further afield.

It can be difficult to come across vacancies in graduate jobs, full time occupation is hard to find without experience and most find that internships can involve heavy competition. Most graduates find that the main issue is simply knowing where to look, and this guide hopes to point you in the right direction.

Check out the '**More Information**' section to see handy links with tips and advice in the search for work.

Main routes to employment

Getting started

As a graduate looking for work in Australia, you should use a variety of strategies, websites being an important starting point in looking for an occupation:

When searching the Internet for job offers and vacancies, it is advisable to bookmark web pages and re-visit them regularly. Make use of email alert services offered by online resources to stay updated with the newest jobs.

Online recruitment and vacancy websites:

- Australian Job Search: www.jobsearch.gov.au
- Career One: www.careerone.com.au
- Careers Online: www.careersonline.com.au
- Employment.com.au: www.employment.com.au
- Gradlink: www.gradlink.edu.au
- Graduate Careers: www.graduateopportunities.com.au
- IT Jobs: www.itjobs.fairfax.com.au
- My Career: www.mycareer.com.au
- SEEK Campus: www.seekcampus.com.au
- SEEK Communications: www.seek.com.au

Social networking

Social networking has become an increasingly common and important part of seeking work, especially with the social media generation. Sites such as Facebook.com and LinkedIn.com have flourished into everyday use for graduates and employers alike, in order to find the right person for the job. Graduates looking for work in their home nation may already be aware of the value of such sites, and of specific sites which are specialised in their own country. Graduates can place details of themselves including their job experience, education level, home/current university as well as a photo if preferred. On some of these sites graduates can also search for jobs according to their specific interest or area of study.

What is clear is that graduates should certainly take the time to discover the potential job opportunities which these sites offer, both socially and at a socio-professional level.

Main routes to employment

The following list of examples is not exhaustive, and contains websites with varying emphasis on professionalism and social networking.

Sites worth checking out (global):

- www.ecademy.com
- www.efactor.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.linkedin.com
- www.myspace.com
- www.plaxo.com
- www.ryze.com
- www.spoke.com

Newspapers are also a helpful starting-point in Australian job-hunts. The Saturday editions often contain large amounts of vacancies.

Key newspapers to look for:

- Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)
- The Advertiser (Adelaide)
- The Age (Melbourne, Victoria)
- The Australian (national)
- The Canberra Times (ACT)
- The Courier Mail (Queensland)
- The West Australian (Western region)

However, around 70% of job vacancies are not advertised in any newspaper. Therefore, the use of alternative sources, persistency and well developed detection skills will help you to discover the hidden jobs.

Main routes to employment

Graduate jobs/Careers Fairs

An interesting way of finding work or further education is through graduate fairs. With varying focuses in each event, graduates can find themselves coming face to face with companies of interest, and may even find interest in something which was not previously considered. Graduate fairs are also a good opportunity to find out about graduate schemes being offered by companies and what these entail.

Many fairs offer other facilities such as CV workshops, letter writing tuition and a chance to network with individuals representing companies of differing sizes and reputations, thus they can offer a good learning opportunity even if you struggle to find a company suited to you.

Many universities in the UK hold their own fairs near the end of the spring/summer term and throughout the summer, so it is well worth getting involved early. There may also be fairs in your home country, whether a national event or at a university which is local to you, so keep your eyes and ears open.

You may find the following websites useful for locating fairs:

- www.careers.vic.gov.au/ - Government careers in Victoria
- www.flinders.edu.au/careers/sub/whatson.php#CAREERSFAIRS2009
- www.graduatecareers.com.au/content/view/full/4020 - List of careers fairs
- www.gradconnection.com.au/blog/tag/careers-fairs - Another useful list of graduate fairs
- www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/careers_fair_dates - Fairs listed by area
- www.reinventyourcareer.com.au - Reinvented Career Expo
- www.vcf.raduatecareers.com.au/index1.php - Virtual careers fair

In each major city there are countless job fairs organised each month. Graduates are advised to check community sites and look for advertisements in local papers and magazines.

Alternative sources of information on jobs and companies:

- Career Information Centres: Centrelink (www.centrelink.gov.au) Government assistance for jobseekers maintaining centres in all Australian major cities.
- Graduate Opportunities (www.graduateopportunities.com) Comprehensive information on graduate jobs in Australia, available in print and online.
- The Yellow Pages (www.yell006Fwpages.com.au) available in print and online.
- Jobson's yearbook of public companies, available at public libraries across the country.

Main routes to employment

When looking for a job, it is important to extend your network of contacts. Let not only your relatives but also friends, former professors and teachers, neighbours and other acquaintances know that you are searching for a job and tell them what kind of job or position you are looking for. Attending career fairs and joining professional networks can help you get in touch with valuable new contacts.

It is also advisable to register with any employment agency or professional networking website up to one year before the date of your return to Australia. Applications for a specific role, however, should be sent no sooner than one month before your scheduled arrival back in Australia.

Another strategy that has proven successful is for some applicants to approach employers directly and send open applications to companies you are interested in working for. An open application is an application that does not respond to a particular vacancy or for a vacancy which may not as yet exist. In some cases, submitting an open application indicates a degree of creativity and your willingness to take initiative.

The right skills and competencies

In a country where class barriers are virtually non-existent, Australian employers are more interested in whether you are able to do the job than in which school or university you attended. Good news for those returning home following international study: an Australian study on 'The attitudes and perceptions of Australian employers towards an overseas study experience' (Brisbane, 2006) shows that graduates with international study experience are particularly appreciated by employers. In particular, employers seeking to expand operations into South East Asia indicating that they value linguistic skills and cross-cultural competencies.

Facing gradually increasing globalisation, Australian employers feel that it is becoming essential for organisations to employ people capable of working with foreign clients, suppliers and partners.

Main routes to employment

Most wanted:

- A positive attitude.
- Intelligence and the ability to apply this intelligence to problem solving.
- Strong communication and negotiation skills.
- Leadership qualities, as well as the ability to work in a team and strong interpersonal skills.
- Time management and organisational skills.
- Relevant experience.
- International experience and cross-cultural competences.
- Australian employers generally also evaluate a candidate's personal fit within their organisation.

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The application letter

A letter of application should attract the recruiter's attention. It should make the potential employer want to look at your application in more detail, read your résumé and hopefully invite you for an interview. Precision, a positive attitude and honesty are the keywords when writing your application letter.

It should explain your motivation for applying, and portray the competencies and skills you have gained during your studies, previous work experience or elsewhere. Try to give concrete examples and avoid empty phrases. Bear in mind that people in Australia are usually practically-minded; they tend to be more impressed by personal experience than by qualifications.

Résumé

In Australia a CV (curriculum vitae) is more commonly referred to as a résumé. Your résumé is an important part of the job application. A résumé is typically two to three pages long, yet it should be as concise as possible. Your résumé should list your personal details, education and employment history, relevant skills, qualifications, and extracurricular activities. Referees and their contact details are usually listed at the end of the résumé.

Do not include personal details about your date of birth, your marital status, your gender or your health, as these should remain private to protect the employee from being discriminated against. Likewise, photographs are generally not included.

Main routes to employment

Digital applications

Digital application forms have become more common. The Internet is considered a fast medium of communication but completing an application form online requires the utmost attention – always check your submission before pressing send. If you are making your application via email, write a concise application email with your résumé attached. Applicants should always remember to use formal language when submitting an online application or applying via email.

The job interview

Throughout the application procedure it is essential to make a good impression. Never lie or bend the truth during your interview, and avoid being pushy or showy.

Preparing for the interview:

- Think in advance about questions that might be asked.
- Find out the objectives of the position and the skills required.
- Research the organisation's background.
- Be clear about your skills, abilities, personal qualities and experience.
- Prepare your own questions to ask the employer.
- Make sure you arrive on time for the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the location it might be worthwhile checking it out in advance.

Some employers set entrance tests to enable them to judge more clearly each candidate's suitability for the job. These will mostly test general abilities, aptitudes and interests related to the job in question. At times, employers might conduct group interviews. You should therefore enquire about the structure and process of the interview in advance.

Where will your career take you?

Research from the i-graduate International Student Barometer study tells us the following about the main career drivers for Australian graduates:

Major career drivers for Australian graduates:

1. I want to develop myself.
2. I want to make a difference to the world.
3. I like to be recognised for my achievements.

©International Student Barometer Summer 2009

Top 3 future plans of Australian students about to graduate from UK HE Institutions:

1. Undecided
2. Employment in Australia.
3. Short term employment in the UK

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Current career prospects

A recent study by the Australian Department of Employment, Education and Training indicates that sectors with a demand for highly skilled labour offer plenty of job opportunities. However, due to increased levels of training there will be greater competition for the positions. The current global economic crisis has caused the number of applications for online job advertisements to greatly increase, while at the same time fewer job advertisements have been published nationwide and beyond seasonal adjustments of labour demand.

Franchising has developed rapidly and is still growing. Australia is seen as 'the most franchised nation in the world'. Wholesale and retail trade are the most important sectors in the Australian economy. Moreover, Australia has future potential for the sale of medical equipment. Despite the ongoing economic downturn, expectations for Australia's future are still relatively stable.

Expansion is expected to occur in financial services, particularly accounting and investment management trusts. Likewise, growth is expected within the fields of telecommunication, retail, construction, wholesale, community services, recreation, tourism, hospitality and personal services.

E-commerce is by far the fastest growing industry, particularly as more and more businesses offer a rapidly growing variety of online services.

Where are the opportunities?

Accounting and finance

A highly developed financial sector makes Australia a leading capital of financial activity in the Asia-Pacific region. Accountancy work is generally seen as a good way to enter the financial sector. Work opportunities lie particularly in the fields of investment banking, payment systems, retail banking, private equity and venture capital, insurance and funds management.

Advanced manufacturing

The originality and innovation of Australia's manufacturing sector has triggered huge investments throughout the last decade. Today, there are numerous work opportunities in the fields of nanotechnology, material innovation and precision engineering. These opportunities have apparently not dwindled too much in the wake of the financial crisis.

Current career prospects

Agriculture

With its diverse climate, Australia provides opportunities as well as risks for the farming industry.

Product development, innovation of farming equipment, as well as research into science-based farming to increase the annual production of agricultural goods; all offer work opportunities for skilled professionals. In response to climate change, water resource management technology has recently grown more important than ever before.

Architecture, planning and construction

The current career prospects for architects, urban planners, construction engineers and project managers on the Australian market are reasonable but not outstanding. In addition to the Australian government, private development consultants and private enterprises are also hiring professionals, so there is potential for work in this field.

Biotechnology

Today, over 400 companies and research centres coordinate their biotechnological operations from Australia. Work opportunities can be found in this sector, particularly in the field of diagnosis, human therapeutics and agricultural biotechnology.

Engineering

Engineering professionals can find work across a variety of sectors in Australia; in particular water management and the development of renewable energy resources are growing areas of opportunity for highly skilled professionals. Talented youngsters may find that this is an area where they will find great success in Australia.

Current career prospects

Health and medical care

The Australian health care sector has grown into a fully-fledged industry, offering job opportunities for medical professionals such as dentists, oncologists and surgeons. Additionally nursing personal, pharmacists, dieticians and patient service managers can currently find a broad range of vacancies.

ICT and e-commerce

ICT professionals can find work in various industries such as property and business services, communication services, government administration, finance and insurance and manufacturing.

The rise of the e-commerce sector has caused the need for previously non-existent jobs such as web designers and web analysts, as well as entirely new professions such as technology risk consultancy. Other work opportunities lie in the fields of application and product development, content development, technical assistance, network engineering and global sourcing.

Mining and energy

Because of the country's wealth in mineral resources, the Australian mining sector continues to provide work in development of mining equipment, as well as in engineering, mine safety and exploration, mineral processing and environmental management. With the government committing to the reduction of carbon emissions, the development of low emission techniques and renewable energy resources has become a huge field of research and investment. Along with the fact that it is currently a huge exporter of coal, Australia is expected to be a leading competitor in carbon storage and the carbon trade business in the Asia-Pacific region.

Where to find more information

General information

www.australia.gov.au access to Australian Government information & services

Australian Department of Employment, Education and Training, P.O. Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.

www.dfat.gov.au Department of Affairs and Trade, Includes names of foreign companies active in Australia under the heading 'country information' / 'trade watch'

www.facs.gov.au current International Social Security Agreements

www.graduateopportunities.com Graduate Opportunities, Graduate Career Council of Australia, P.O. Box 28, Parkville VIC 3052, Australia

www.immi.gov.au Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, Central Office, Benjamin Offices, Chan Street, Belconnen ACT 2617, Australia

www.jpmmmedia.com.au/kompass Kompass Australia – Business Directory, APN Business Publishing, Level1/10 Grattan Street, Prahran, Victoria 3181, Australia

Graduate Opportunities, Graduate Career Council of Australia, P.O. Box 28, Parkville VIC 3052, Australia

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), P.O. Box 1407, Canberra ACT 2601

Advice and tips on Careers Fairs, CVs and general job seeking

www.articlealley.com/article_1547972_36.html - An article for those in the nursing profession.

www.collegegrad.com/articles/dont-give-up.shtml - An article on staying positive throughout the work search process

www.employmentblawg.com/2010/job-seeking-tips-for-college-graduates - Further tips in the competitive field of employment seeking graduates

www.fpef.org/Education/Tips.htm - Some good tips on networking

www.thegraduate.co.uk/static_generic.cgi?a=tmg_jobboards – Link with good information for those still considering staying in the UK after study

www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/graduates_with_disability - A link providing useful tips and stats for graduates with a disability

www.londongradfair.co.uk/autumn - The Guardian's annual job fair for graduates. It is located in London.

www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article1277.html - Tips on how to work out your finances post-study.

www.online-graduate.co.uk/tipsforgrads.html - Further tips for graduates seeking work experience.

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international_students.htm Information for international students

Where to find more information

Books and Articles

Australia's Top 500 Companies; Dun & Bradstreet, Australia www.dnb.com.au

Doing business with Australia and New Zealand – Disregard hierarchy, be modest.

Ripmeester, Nannette: (Expatica 2006)

www.expatica.com/actual/article.asp?subchannel_id=159&story_id=31191

Country Guides for International Students series updated by Expertise in Labour Mobility, Summer 2010

Acknowledgements

This guide was produced with funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the devolved administrations under the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2), and we are grateful for that support in enabling this project to take place.

The Country Guides for International Students are written by Expertise in Labour Mobility with support from i-graduate. We would like to thank Zana Rustemi, Archie Pollock & Nannette Ripmeester for providing extensive in-country information.

Disclaimer

Whilst all efforts have been made to ensure the information in this Country Guide is correct at the time of writing, readers are advised that procedures and information sources may change regularly.

Appendix 1 : Sample Résumé

YOUR NAME

Address:

Phone:

CAREER OBJECTIVE

This is a short sentence which outlines your career goals – what you are trying to achieve.

REFERENCE EXTRACT

A section from one of your written references which comments on your work performance and character.

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

Technology

Computer Software

Typing Speed

Office Equipment

Marketing

Outline subjects studies in course

Communication

Outline subjects studies in course

Personal

Optional

EDUCATIONAL DETAILS

Day/Month/Year

(recent to past)

Educational Institution

Name of Course

Example.

Sept 1998 - Jan 1999

University Darwin | Australia

Diploma of Business (Marketing)

Appendix 1 : Sample CV

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Day/Month/Year

(recent to past)

Position

Name of Company

Example.

**3 Jan 1998 – 30 June
1999**

Commercial Cleaner

CANTEBURY SERVICE PTY

- Cleaning
- Use of Industrial Polisher
- Cleaning of Public Areas

25 April 1996 – 20 Dec 1997

Sales Assistant

FASHION ESCAPE

- Customer Service
- Sales
- Merchandising
- Cash Register Operation

PERSONAL INTERESTS

This could be sporting, social, or cultural interests.

REFEREES

Name

Company

Position

Phone Number