your creative job search

Flinders University
inspiring achievement
Flinders University’s Bachelor degree programs aim to produce graduates who:

- Are knowledgeable
- Can apply their knowledge
- Communicate effectively
- Are ethical
- Are collaborative
- Can work independently
- Connect across boundaries

www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities
JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

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1. INTRODUCTION

After many years of study, the final year draws close and it is time to give some thought and planning to securing the job offer, so that you can put your qualification to work. The purpose of this booklet is to provide a comprehensive overview of the different strategies you may use in your search for a graduate job, from thoroughly covering avenues for advertised positions to accessing jobs that may never be advertised. We also include ideas that will add professionalism to your job search through keeping efficient records and using the telephone effectively.

We have other booklets available covering all aspects of graduate job search. You may wish to obtain your free copies of our booklets from the Careers and Employer Liaison centre, or download them from our website.

• Writing Your Application - CV and cover letters.
• Winning Graduate Applications – responding to application forms
• Addressing Selection Criteria
• Assessment Centres & Selection Tests
• At the Interview

• The booklet, ‘Networking - going proactive’ is also available to be downloaded from our website.

Many people are reluctant to approach an employer unless in answer to an advertised position. Yet it is estimated that around 70 per cent of jobs are not publicly advertised. There are a number of creative techniques you can use to uncover hidden vacancies, which is one of the purposes of this booklet. Let’s start by having a look at the graduate job search scene in the box below.

Graduate Destinations 2008 - The report of the graduate destination survey, Graduate Careers Australia, 2009. Chapter 13: Job Search Methods, Page 37.

“Internet and print media were, by far, the most commonly used job search methods in 2008. Following these were three strategies each employed by about a third of respondents.
- A direct approach to employers
- Consulting family or friends
- Using a university careers service.”

Therefore, successful job search involves utilising a broad array of both traditional and proactive strategies to maximise your employment opportunities, that is: responding to job advertisements, use of the Internet, using a network of contacts, contacting an employer ‘on spec’ etc.
We will cover all these approaches in this booklet. It is worth remembering that job search techniques and strategies continue to change along with technological developments, for example, the rapid growth of online communities such as Facebook, My Space and so on.

We wish you well in your job search endeavours, and your transition to the world of work!

**Before you begin**

Be clear about your job search goals – what vacancies (advertised and unadvertised) are you looking for? What are your preferred graduate jobs or graduate employers? What are your back-up options?

Other factors to consider:
- geographical – is your job search Adelaide, South Australia, Australia wide, and/or global?
- workplace culture
- remuneration package
- lifestyle.

This booklet assumes that you have already conducted some self-assessment to develop a good knowledge of what you have to offer an employer; your skills, knowledge and abilities, values, attitudes, goals and so on. Ensure you have a resume that effectively markets your skills and qualities and that you have honed your interviewing skills. This is the cornerstone of successful job search.

**2. FLINDERS UNIVERSITY GRADUATE QUALITIES**

As a result of successfully pursuing your studies at Flinders University, you will have developed program-specific professional competencies as well as being able to demonstrate a range of qualities.

Flinders University’s Bachelor degree programs aim to produce graduates who:
- are knowledgeable
- can apply their knowledge
- communicate effectively
• can work independently
• are collaborative
• value ethical behaviour
• connect across boundaries.

More information about the Graduate Qualities, including descriptions is available at: www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/.

As you conduct your self-assessment and review your educational experiences, consider how you may both demonstrate and draw on these qualities as you embark on the next step in your career.

We are proud that so many Flinders graduates identify with, and can be distinguished by, these distinctive academic, professional and cultural characteristics.” (Flinders University Graduate Qualities statement www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/graduate-qualities_home.cfm)

3. ORGANISING AND DOCUMENTING YOUR JOB SEARCH

Create a schedule
Finding a job is an exciting, complex and time-consuming business. Be structured! Have a plan and recognize that job search can take time. You may submit a number of applications, and receive rejections before you secure your job.

Effective job search requires:
• organisation
• planning
• follow through.

Create a weekly job search schedule, including times when you will be checking advertisements, following up on applications, making speculative applications, networking and other job search activities.

Organise your portfolio
It’s a good idea to set up a file or folder containing copies of relevant documents. These will include: birth certificate, academic transcripts/certificates, referees, relevant school reports, references from part-time or previous employment, and up-to-date resume, copies of job advertisements, applications and selection criteria. Have electronic versions of your unofficial transcript, job applications, resume and so on, filed in a logical and easily accessible way (and have a backed up copy).
Document your job search activities
You will also need to keep a record of your job search activities. There are plenty of books and online articles on job search describing ways to keep such a record with suggested forms and techniques to organise your search.

When you make any contact about a job keep a record - date, time, request, to whom you spoke, action and outcomes.

It is important to keep your job search file up-to-date and organised. When you are making a phone call or writing a letter about a job, the file should be on hand and easy to use. Hassles about not having a copy of a document at the right time or not being able to remember when you last contacted a potential employer, or even who the contact person was, are something you don’t need. Maintaining good records enables you to keep track of valuable contacts as well as project your professionalism to prospective employers.

You can document the following information:

- Job advertisements for jobs applied for, the name of the organisation, the position to which you are applying, and where you saw the application
- Dates you applied for jobs and when to make follow up contact
- The details of the contact person for each job for which you have applied, including this person’s name, email address, work phone number and postal address
- Notes on any follow up activities for every job for which you have applied
- A schedule mapping out your deadlines, potential or confirmed interviews (names, dates, and times) and the dates on which you might expect to hear about a particular decision
- Names, dates, and times of informational interviews
- Names of people to network with
- Dates of follow up contacts made.

4. USING THE TELEPHONE IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

All of us use the telephone on a daily basis; it is such a central tool in our lives that we often forget how to use it properly. Responding to a job advertisement, enquiring about the status of your application, following up leads from our Gradjobs email lists and contacting an employment agency can all require a telephone call. Remember the old saying - you only get one chance to make a good first impression.

Be organised
In many households there is never a working pen or clean piece of paper near the telephone. While you are looking for work you need to be sure these things are
always handy.

Your voicemail must sound polite and provide clear instructions.

Always have a diary on hand during job search so that you can quickly organise interview times and so on.

**Using the telephone**

As stated above, although the phone is so much a part of everyday life using it well is a skill. Potential employers cannot help but be impressed by someone who knows what they want to say and who is able to express it clearly. If you think you may be nervous in applying for jobs by phone, get some practice. Arrange to call a friend and “role play” the application with your friend playing first the part of the receptionist likely to answer the phone and then the part of the recruitment officer who will talk to you about the job.

Before you make the call, make a list of what details a potential employer may ask you for. Plan your opening line. “I’m ringing about the job” is not a good way to start. If it helps, have a basic script to hand – this help you to make a professional start to the conversation and gives you some prompts to follow; after awhile, this will become second nature.

Ensure your tone and language when talking to an employer is professional.

Begin with a greeting. “Good morning, I am ringing about the position as a trainee banker advertised on CareerOne” or “I am ringing to follow-up on the letter I sent you regarding employment opportunities as a graduate lawyer” is a far more businesslike approach.

Provide any information clearly and concisely. Don’t use slang and don’t mumble.

If you are told that the job has already gone, or that there are no current vacancies, ask if you can leave your name and details in order to be considered for any future vacancy. Use the call as an opportunity to network. Ask if the person you are speaking to knows of any other vacancies that would suit you. Remain polite and speak pleasantly. Who knows, another vacancy may arise while your call is fresh in the employer’s memory.

If you are leaving a message, don’t rush it, think about what you need to say, and slow down when providing a telephone number – don’t you hate it when you have to replay a recorded message several times to get the caller’s name and number?!

**Be ready for incoming calls**

Don’t forget that you need to be equally impressive when answering calls made back to you. During a job search, assume that any incoming call is from a potential employer. Answer with a greeting and your name, spoken clearly and pleasantly. And make sure that other members of your residence know how important such calls may be. No-one wants to miss out on a job opportunity because someone in the house answered “No, he’s not in/I am not sure when she’s back” and put the phone
down, or that they have not recorded a name or telephone number correctly if you are out (“Somebody wanted to speak to you about the job.” is not enough information!).

If you have an answering machine or voicemail make sure the message is appropriate and business like - remove any loud background music, or funny jokes - individuals' sense of humour does vary!

If an interview is offered, write down the details carefully and ask the name/s of the person/people who will conduct the interview. If you are unsure of anything you are told, ask the person to repeat it. Don’t take chances with street names and numbers or telephone numbers. Transfer this information into your diary immediately.

In summary
Be prepared and organised with pen, diary, paper, correspondence to hand and attitude prepared. ‘Smile before you dial.’

Voice tone makes up 82% of your message over the phone. It is essential to remember that:

- Warmth communicates friendliness.
- Crispness communicates self-confidence.
- Enthusiasm communicates a positive attitude.

Use clear language, do not use slang, be courteous, be patient and use the caller’s name i.e. Mr. Smith.

You can guide and control the call by:
- listening (use listening noises ‘yes’, repeat their words)
- asking questions (open & closed) to gather information
- recording and repeating key elements.

Make your notes during the call; ‘notes delayed are notes not made’

Be ready to volunteer any useful information about yourself; for example, how you will fit the position or your strengths, skills or abilities.
5. JOB SEARCH USING ADVERTISED POSITIONS

‘I used a number of sources, looking at the graduate positions available through the Careers Centre website. I also got emails on positions available. I searched the Internet and looked at other graduate websites and at the jobs available. Looking at websites of companies I was interested in working for also helped. Initially, my search was very focused in one area, but I worked on expanding it and found other areas that were relevant also.’ Jodie, Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) & Graduate Certificate in Health, Graduate Position, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Use Careers and Employer Liaison Centre Services
Extensive information on current vacancies is available at the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre website - see www.flinders.edu.au/careers > ‘Vacancies’ and link under ‘Search for graduate vacancies’. You will find job vacancies including:

- graduate recruitment programs
- immediate-start graduate positions
- vacation work programs, co-operative placements and internships
- international opportunities and TESOL positions
- online Public Sector Recruitment Guide.

Subscribe to our GRADJOBS email lists – see www.flinders.edu.au/careers > ‘Vacancies’ and link under ‘have jobs emailed to you’ - you will receive information on vacancies related to your degree, and can review these vacancies in relation to your skills and needs.

Attend Employer on campus visits and Recruitment/Careers Fairs. Careers Fairs provide you with information about the opportunities in various fields and the opportunity to discuss requirements, applications, opportunities for work experience, vacation and graduate careers directly with prospective employers. You can check the dates and times for our Careers Fairs each year at: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/students and link under ‘What’s On’.

Use the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre’s Online Resources Database – available at: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student >Your Career > ‘Search Resources’. You can search by Area of Interest, Field of Study or Country.

Graduate Recruitment Programs
Several large public and private sector organisations have graduate recruitment programs – this includes the South Australian Public Service. These are aimed at final year and recent graduates. Find out about the timing of recruitment programs in your degree area. Many of these programs are advertised from March (sometimes
even earlier) for positions that start the following year, so it is essential that you organise yourself to find out about these vacancies. While the majority of these programs are advertised March – May, some are advertised later in the year, and a few may even have a couple of intakes in the year.

Note that while some of these programs target specific degree areas, many are open to all disciplines.

You need to consider well in advance of the ‘Graduate Recruitment Season’ which employers you are keen to target. Research the graduate pages on their website where there is valuable information, including timing of applications, recruitment processes and in some cases guidelines for applicants. Some organisations, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Centrelink invite you to pre-register your interest in future recruitment rounds via email from their websites.

Key websites for Information on Graduate recruitment programs
- www.graduateopportunities.com
- www.unimail.com.au
- www.gradcareers.com.au
- South Australian Public Sector Graduate Register: www.graduate.sa.gov.au

**Discipline-specific recruitment processes**
- Teaching: In June a 3-day program occurs for final year Education students covering opportunities in Government and Independent schools.

- Nursing/Midwifery: A Careers Fair is held in July, and a Graduate Nurses and Midwifery Guide is produced each year at about this time. This booklet provides details on application procedures and program details for all major providers of Graduate Nurse and Graduate Midwifery Programs in South Australia. It is available at: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student/Whats_On/nursesguide.html

**Vacancies – other opportunities**
Other employers recruit graduates in different ways, so you need to make full use of all vacancy sources available to you such as GRADJOBS.

If you are looking for other opportunities, starting whilst in your final year maximises your chance of obtaining work prior to completion of your degree.

Some employers recruit when they need to fill a post, replace someone, or for a new position. These opportunities may be advertised in the press or filled by a recruitment agency.

Key websites
- www.careerone.com.au
• www.mycareer.com.au
• www.seek.com.au
• www.jobsearch.gov.au

**Job alerts**

At sites such as CareerOne, Seek and MyCareer you can usually register to receive job alerts, where you have set various criteria and matching jobs are sent to you.

**Newspapers**

Read the employment pages in daily and weekly newspapers (for example, *The Advertiser*, *Australian*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* (Melbourne), *Financial Review* and *The Canberra Times*) or check them out online – see above and check for links from our website (Online Resources Database – available at: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student >Your Career > Search Resources – select ‘Area of Interest’, then ‘Online newspapers’.)

Consult both local and national newspapers and regional newspapers if appropriate. Don’t overlook other parts of the paper – for example, Arts jobs may appear in the Weekend or arts section of the paper, and business appointments in the news section. Vacancies for specialist areas, such as information technology, higher education, media and education may appear on other days.

**Specialised websites**

Also use more specialised websites, such as the following, that advertise vacancies for different sectors. Check out the links from the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre website for some of these sites specific to your degree area.

• NRMjobs: positions in the environment, water and natural resource management sector: www.nrmjobs.com.au

• The Environmental Jobs network: www.environmentaljobs.com.au


• HACjobs: positions in the Health, Community and Social services sector in Australia and New Zealand

• COMjobs: a weekly email bulletin which advertises job vacancies and other opportunities for professional communicators in Australia and New Zealand: www.comjobs.com.au/

• Australian Council for International Development (ACFID): www.acfid.asn.au

• Nursing Careers Allied Health: www.ncah.com.au
UniJobs is a university job website where Job seekers can visit UniJobs to search, find, compare and apply for university jobs throughout Australia: www.unijobs.com.au/

For some sites, a fee is involved for access to job vacancies, for example:
Arts Hub - Arts Hub lists jobs in the arts/creative sector from Australia and around the World: www.artshub.com.au/au

“Keep an eye on jobs in your field long before you are even thinking of applying – if you know the field you are less likely to miss out. Sign up to whatever job lists you can find in your field.” Bachelor of Environmental Management (Hons), Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Officer in an SA Government Department.

Recruitment Agencies
You can also check some Recruitment Agencies websites for advertised positions and apply online. The Recruitment and Consulting Services Association Ltd have an Online Member Index designed to help you quickly find a recruitment company: www.rcsa.com.au. For more information, refer to the handout: Using Recruitment Agencies in Your Job Search.

Job Advertisements with a closing date
If there is a closing date, use the time available to research the organisation and the position. Usually when a closing date is given, applications received prior to this date will not be considered until the closing date, so there is no great advantage in applying before the final date. Your time will be far better spent in finding out as much as possible about the organisation so that in your application you can give a good indication of your suitability for employment, based on your achievements, abilities and skills which are relevant to the position.

Job Advertisements without a closing date
If there is no closing date this generally indicates the position will be filled as soon as suitable applicants have been interviewed. In this situation you cannot afford to waste time. You may wish to ring/email the organisation to find out how long a period of time will elapse before they start interviewing. Ascertain the most appropriate method of application i.e. is there an application form, emailed application, or a letter and a curriculum vitae? Don’t waste 2-3 days thinking about it. By applying you are in no way committing yourself to accepting the job.

Searching through job advertisements is one component of the many job search strategies you will need to use in your hunt for a graduate position. However, don’t rely on it alone, as proactive and creative strategies such as approaching employers directly, networking, and informational interviewing can also yield success.
6. USING THE WWW IN YOUR JOB SEARCH: ADVERTISED POSITIONS

Organising your Job Search

1. Use a search engine: define your search terms.

Employment opportunities, job listings, job openings, job vacancies, employment opportunities, positions available, resume postings are some helpful phrases to use.

2. Get jobs emailed to you.

By subscribing to the right mailing lists, you can access vacancies. A number of job sites will email jobs to you. Subscribe to our GRADJOBS email list from our website.

3. Make a Schedule to Look For Jobs, and Stick To It.

Establish a regular schedule to check your job resources regularly.

4. Find your favourite web sites.

Bookmark your favourite websites and contact employers listing vacancies immediately.


Use a system to keep track of whom you have contacted and where your resume is posted.

6. Follow Up With a Phone Call.

Follow up with a phone call to make your CV has arrived.

Access our website and online databases to link you with employers. Go to: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student.

7. CREATIVE JOB SEARCH

The modern workplace calls for a creative and energetic approach to job search and career management.

Creative job search involves:
• researching jobs and employers
• devising a strategy for gaining and accessing contacts
• networking - you'll do it several times in your life
• getting people to advise and help you
• tailored resume/s and cover letters, and interview skills.

“I found that my most successful way of finding work was by contacting companies I’d like to work for and simply asking what I can do to make a graduate like myself useful to a company like theirs. This led to meetings and networks and, finally, a great job. …I asked the owner and principal biologist of Ecosure for any advice on my resume and if there was a way to get some work experience going. It just so happened that there was an unadvertised job going and I suited what they were after. Once I got my foot in the door at two days a week, it took me less than a month to weasel my way in to full time work.” Nick, Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, Biologist, Ecosure.

For some employers, jobs may generally be filled through speculative approaches from graduates sending in a targeted CV and covering letter. This is also known as cold canvassing and involves making direct approaches to organisations that have not actually invited applications.

The reality is that many employers will never advertise. For example, they may be:
• In certain industries, where it is the norm for potential employees to look for employers - not the other way round. For example, in ‘glamour’ areas such as media/advertising/public relations, where lots of people already approach them directly, so making speculative approaches is the norm.
• An employer who does not wish to incur the expense of advertising and having to sort through a flood of applications of variable quality.
• An employer who is keen to fill a contract or a vacancy as quickly as possible, and may go to resumes already on file.

“I also contacted my company before they advertised for a job - which showed that I wanted to work there, and I had the initiative to introduce myself to the company. I think it was this that made me stand out from the other applicants.” Luisa, Bachelor of Environmental Science (Honours), Hydrogeologist in a consulting organisation.

8. BARRIERS TO CREATIVE JOB SEARCH

Many people base their job search on totally false information. One of the biggest barriers to a rewarding job search is the belief in labour market myths.

Myth: Employers won’t talk to you unless they have an opening.
Fact: Wrong! Employers are always on the lookout for good staff. Be one!

Myth: All recruiting begins with Human Resources. This is not true.
Fact: Most job openings are filled before they're listed. And many organisations don't even have a Human Resources Section!

Myth: Most Jobs are advertised.
Fact: Wrong. Direct applications and networking are important ways to find employment.

9. APPROACHING EMPLOYERS DIRECTLY

“I sent my resume and qualifications with a letter expressing my interest in the Department in general. There happened to be some work available and they contacted me.” Amy, Arts (Honours Sociology), gained contract work as a Research Assistant, Office of Crime Statistics and Research.

For an efficient and effective job search, it is essential that you have defined your professional area and researched the employers who recruit in this area.

Job Hunting Steps
• Research and identify employers who recruit graduates from your degree.
• Prepare a general Resume geared towards a particular industry sector – you can then adapt it to target each organisation as required.
• Decide on your time frame to make contact with these organisations.
• Identify by name who to write to in each organisation. This could be the Human Resources Officer, or it could be the Manager of a particular area. Never send a general letter to an organisation.
• Write your cover letter, ensuring that your letter states clearly what you are looking for - employment (and in what type of position), an informational interview or volunteer work experience. Be clear what skills and experience you have to offer the employer (address the reader’s ‘What’s in it for me?’ factor).
• Send/email your letter and resume.
• Follow up contact - follow up your letter with a telephone call to show your interest and motivation. See if you can arrange a meeting to discuss job possibilities, review your application or gain further contacts.

An example of how this can work …
A Senior Social Worker in a Government Agency told how a graduate had arranged to meet with her to express interest in the area, and to interview her about the workplace, structure of the team and so on. When a short-term vacancy arose, she immediately contacted this student. These people are remembered when positions come up.
10. IDENTIFYING LEADS/EMPLOYERS

It is a good idea to compile a list of the organisations that are likely to be of interest to you, and also to keep up to date with trends, developments and ‘who is doing what’ in your career field. See below for various strategies and ideas on how to do this.

Organisations’ websites
If you are interested in a specific employer, it is a good idea to look at their website. Many employers now use their websites as their main recruitment vehicle.

Gradfacts
Check out ‘What can I do with my degree in ....?’ The information available include examples of possible job titles and employers for all undergraduate degrees and some of the major streams of study at this University, plus extensive web links for further career research:

Academic Departments
Ask your lecturers/tutors for information about suitable organisations.

Networking
Make a list of your contacts and let them know you are looking for work. Whilst they may not be able to help you directly, they may be able to refer you to people who can. Our booklet Using your Networks is available online from the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre website. For example, if you have undertaken course placements, a WorkReady Internship program, or other volunteering, contact the person who supervised you and let them know that you are looking for work. See if they have any strategies/advice for you – after all, they are ‘at the coalface’ of their sector!

Professional Associations
Some professional associations and unions produce publications on trends and current developments, for example, APESMA. Some have regular events – workshops, and ‘happy hours’ that could provide valuable networking opportunities. For more information, refer to the handout: Professional Associations and Your Career development.

“I met my first employer at a conference, and they encouraged me to move to Sydney, offering some short-term work. When this work finished, my first employer recommended me to my current employer (AHMS) who I have been with for almost three years. I guess a lot of it came down to being in the right place at the right time, but none of it would of happened if I hadn’t been at the conference.” Adam, Bachelor of Archaeology (Honours), Heritage Consultant, Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd (AHMS).
Directories
For example:
• The Directory of Community Services South Australia: www.infosearchweb.com/
• Kompass: www.kompass.com
• Yellow pages: www.yellowpages.com.au

Google alerts
Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic. Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:
• monitoring a developing news story
• keeping current on an industry or employer.

Media


Other

You can search the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre’s Online Resources Database – available at: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student >Your Career > Search Resources for employer directories and portals.

11. HOW TO PROCEED
The self-initiated job search can be successful if you follow a few basic guidelines;

• No one will offer you a job if they have never heard of you, so it is up to you to let people know you exist and are available.

• You only want to approach those employers in whom you have a real interest and to whom you have something to say. There is time and cost constraints on the number of people to whom you can send meaningful targeted letters/emails and then make follow up contact.
• Start the letter/email with phrases such as the following – to clearly indicate the purpose of your contact:
  o I am writing about the possibility of a graduate position …
  o I am seeking an entry level position that would use my graduate skills …
  o I am seeking a position that would complement the knowledge and skills gained through my tertiary studies …

• Do your research. In your application letter it is up to you to persuade the employer that you have something to offer. It is not enough to say you are interested in getting into journalism or public relations. So are a lot of other people. You must have something to say about your skills, interests, and potential; and relate these to the industry and the particular employer in a way that will make a positive impression. This can be a time consuming task but it is worth it.

• If you say in your letter that you will follow up in 5 or 10 days: do it. Make a note in your diary or calendar.

• Be patient - you may not get the job straight away (it can take time for possibilities to develop), but be approached by the employer weeks or months later.

Beware the ease of email! While it is a cheap, rapid and easy way to contact a huge number of employers in a very short space of time, this strategy can backfire if you have not researched and tailored each and every contact that you make. Never send 100’s of ‘template’ emails/letters – you will be left wondering why no one ever gets back to you.

Post Your Resume On-Line
Another strategy is to post your resume to an online database so that interested employers can access it. For example, at Career One you can make your resume viewable to employers and recruiters and at Seek you can submit your resume to the Resume Database so potential employers can find you. Remember to use electronic resume tips - available online or from the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre. Do not use this strategy in isolation.
12. PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SECTOR
The South Australian Public Sector is a challenging and exciting work environment that offers scope for your career development. Flinders University graduates work in a diversity of roles in the Public Sector – some are involved in policy, others are working in fields such as research, science, human resources, finance and business, community services, environmental work, legal roles, project management, event coordination – not to mention in positions such as GIS Officer, Social Worker, and the list goes on!

The departments that form the SA Public Sector work together to fulfill the SA Strategic Plan and they offer a diversity of career opportunities. They are listed below.

South Australian Government Departments
For information including departmental contacts and addresses visit the South Australia Central web site at: www.sacentral.sa.gov.au/

• Auditor-General's Department
• Department for Environment and Heritage
• Department for Families and Communities
• Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure
• Department of Education and Children's Services
• Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology
• Department of Health
• Department of Justice
• Department of Planning and Local Government
• Department of Primary Industries and Resources
• Department of the Premier and Cabinet
• Department of Trade and Economic Development
• Department of Treasury and Finance
• Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation
South Australian Government Graduate Recruitment Register
Once you complete an application, your details will be included on a database register of eligible graduates. Having your name and details of your qualification/s on this register means that Government Departments seeking a graduate are able to search the register for graduates with the qualifications they need and invite them to participate in a selection process for a graduate position.

Web address www.graduate.sa.gov.au

Other graduate registers and recruitment in the South Australian Government
The Auditor-General's Department coordinates a Graduate Recruitment and Development Program for University graduates with qualifications in Accounting, Commerce and Economics seeking a career in Auditing.

Department of Treasury and Finance coordinates a Graduate Development Program for university graduates in Accounting, Commerce, Economic and Finance disciplines

Other Departments may also conduct Programs, e.g. Environment and Heritage, Families and Communities, plus the Department for Education and Children's Services recruit Education/Teaching graduates for SA Schools.

Other points of entry
It is important to consider a variety of entry points into the sector. You don't need to join a formal graduate program to work in the Government Sector. Check relevant Government job vacancy web sites to see the full range of job opportunities. Once inside the sector you can apply for other internal vacancies.

Keep an eye on the press and check the South Australian Government's Notice of Vacancies website www.vacancies.sa.gov.au/. The notice of vacancies lists Public Sector job vacancies. If you would like selected vacancies to be automatically sent to you each week or if you would like to save your regular searches, you can use the Notice of Vacancies’ Email Alert function.

Most positions are advertised initially in the Notice of Vacancies before they are advertised outside the Public Sector (several may be advertised in both simultaneously). Members of the public can only apply for positions advertised in the public press. Obtain the Job and Person Specification (nearly all Public Sector vacancies will have one) for any Government position that you apply for and address the Selection Criteria in a separate document in your application. Pick up information from the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre or our website on Addressing Selection Criteria.

Further to our discussion regarding creative job search methods above, consider directly approaching Departments in which you are interested. Approach the people who can directly hire you, e.g. Team leaders, Branch Managers, Section Heads, Coordinators, Scientists, Researchers – they may have contract or casual work going that you would be eligible for.
Websites of Interest
South Australia’s Strategic Plan – You can register to receive regular e-mail updates on South Australia’s Strategic Plan: www.stateplan.sa.gov.au/

South Australian Policy Online – You can subscribe to the SAPO Newsletter. This is a free information email that is sent fortnightly: www.sapo.org.au/subscribe/

Comments from Flinders Graduates in the SA Public Sector

“The 12-month graduate development program includes personal and professional development and involves monthly training sessions on government policy and procedures, held with graduates from other departments.” Nicoline, Bachelor of Commerce, Graduate Officer, Department of Treasury and Finance

“This job can lead me down so many paths. I have already been exposed to a wide range of tasks in which I can gain experience.” Bachelor of Arts, Project Officer, Courts Administration Authority.

“Government is a good place to begin a career and government experiences provide a solid foundation and are greatly valued (in my experience) in the private sector. Support and assistance is provided to assist new graduates and the opportunity for advancement is available to good quality candidates.” Lisa, Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), commenced her Government career as a Human Resources Consultant, Corporate Human Resources, Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA.

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

The Australian Public Service (APS) is one of the larger employers in the country, providing career opportunities and temporary work in a wide range of agencies. There is strong competition for jobs and selection is based on ability to do the work.

‘Just over half (52 %) of all 146,000 federal public servants have tertiary qualifications, and of last year’s 15,000 recruits, nearly two-thirds (63 %) were graduates. ‘More grads choosing to go public’ By Verona Burgess Australian Financial Review Published: 29 June 2007.

Types of Positions Available
There are a number of ways of pursuing employment in the APS. You don’t need to join a formal graduate program to work in the Government Sector. Depending on your qualifications and interests, you may be interested in the following types of positions:

• Graduate positions
• Administrative jobs at higher levels
• Entry Level Clerical/Administrative positions

• Indigenous Australians are encouraged to apply for positions designated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as well as other general vacancies advertised as open to all Australians

• Temporary positions are quite often available at all levels.

Where to find them

APSjobs website
All APS agencies advertise (‘notify’) jobs in the weekly APS Employment Gazette: www.apsjobs.gov.au/

Individual Australian Government agency websites
Many agencies also list current opportunities on their internet sites and some also have Temporary Employment Registration Forms - try the Government On-Line Directory site for their extensive links to these agencies: www.gold.gov.au/

Newspapers/Online Job Advertisements
Most APS jobs are also advertised in the general press, most frequently on Saturdays and Wednesdays. However note that not all positions will be advertised here.

APS Campaigns
To find out about current and upcoming recruitment initiatives, link to ‘Campaigns’ at the APS Employment Gazette (www.apsjobs.gov.au/). These include graduate programs, large bulk recruitment rounds or specialist skill campaigns to recruit particular skills that are needed in the Australian Public Service. For example, you can link to; Finance, Graduates, ICT and Temporary Employment Register Campaigns.

Graduate Positions
Many Commonwealth agencies have graduate recruitment campaigns for people who have, or will have, qualifications from recognised higher education institutions at the end of the year in which they apply. Through graduate programs, agencies provide on the job training, professional development, rotations across the organisation. They are a great way to build your future career.

How do I find out about them?
These advertisements are usually placed in the public press, in The Gazette and are advertised through the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre and various publications.

Agency Websites
The Internet sites of these agencies may have information on how they recruit their graduates. Some organisations, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Centrelink invite you to pre-register your interest in future recruitment rounds via email from their websites.
**GRADJOBS**  
By subscribing to our GRADJOBS email lists – see www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student and link under ‘have jobs emailed to you’, you will receive information on vacancies, employer campus visits and graduate recruitment programs.

**Careers and Employer Liaison Centre Recruitment/Careers Fairs**  
Many of the organisations that offer Graduate recruitment programs present information sessions on campus and/or attend Careers and Employer Liaison Centre Recruitment/Careers Fairs. These fairs are an opportunity for students to meet with representatives of organisations in an informal environment. For more information visit: www.flinders.edu.au/careers/sub/whatson.php

**Publications advertising graduate opportunities**  
- Graduate Opportunities: www.graduateopportunities.com/
- Hobsons Graduate Careers: www.gradcareers.com.au

**When do I apply? What is the application process?**  
APS agencies may advertise Graduate Recruitment Programs from March each year for final year students. The successful candidates then commence the Graduate Program from January or early the following year. As a result, you need to be ready to commence applications for these programs from the very start of your final year. If you leave your job search until Semester Two of your final year, the reality is that many, if not most, of the Graduate Recruitment Programs will have closed.

Graduate recruitment is a competitive process. Selection methods used by employers include online applications, selection criteria, interviews (and sometimes more than one interview), aptitude tests, role-plays, written assessments, assessment centres with activities such as group discussions and presentations.

**Indigenous Australians**

**The National Indigenous Cadetship Project**  
The National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP) links Indigenous tertiary students with employers in a cadetship arrangement involving full-time study and work placements.

To find out more about the eligibility criteria for cadetships and employers who want cadets visit the NICP website: www.nicp.dewr.gov.au/  
For further information call the Indigenous Employment Line on 1802 102 or email: nicp@dewr.gov.au
**Indigenous Graduate Opportunities**

The Australian Government recruits Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university graduates for opportunities in a variety of APS agencies, across a range of disciplines: [www.apsc.gov.au/indigenous/graduates.htm](http://www.apsc.gov.au/indigenous/graduates.htm)

For further information contact
Phone: 02 6202 3592
Email: indrecruit@apsc.gov.au

**Professional Websites**

Australian Policy Online (APO) – A free weekly email newsletter including notice of new material at APO, as well as job openings, events, and other notices from Australia's public policy research community: [www.apo.org.au/about.shtml](http://www.apo.org.au/about.shtml)

The Institute of Public Administration Australia is the professional association for those involved in public administration (extensive links available): [www.ipaa.org.au/](http://www.ipaa.org.au/)

**Comments from Flinders Graduates in the Australian Public Sector**

“As a Graduate, I have broad experience of what the department does, through undertaking three rotations throughout my graduate year. I advise the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on policy issues, support the planning and monitor the implementation of key government programs, and provide high level support for official visits. This year, I have worked in a number of areas such as social policy, Cabinet, national security and APEC.” Rebecca, Bachelor of International Studies (Honours), Graduate (now a Policy Adviser), Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

“The Graduate Program consists of three rotations in different areas of the Department. My first rotation was in a water policy area, and my current rotation deals with the EPBC Act. I have been involved in releasing reports, writing briefs to the Minister and other elements of my section's day-to-day work.” Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice (Hons)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science, Graduate, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

**EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTERSTATE**

If you are interested in working in a State or Territory Government Department interstate, this handout discusses your options in terms of both graduate programs and where you can locate general interstate public sector vacancies online.

**Graduate programs**

Some State/Territory Governments interstate conduct yearly Graduate Recruitment Programs and others provide specialised information on graduate opportunities on
their websites. Some Programs are targeted at specific disciplines, for example, Teaching and Nursing, while others seek graduates from a variety of degrees. Here are some examples:


Queensland: Queensland Public Sector: www.jobs.qld.gov.au/ (link to ‘Students and Graduates’ then see Graduate Programs)

Northern Territory Government: www.nt.gov.au/dcis/hr/recruitment/jobs/career.html
Graduates from diverse disciplines and backgrounds are encouraged to apply for the Northern Territory Public Sector Graduate Development Program. The Northern Territory Treasury also recruits Graduates for the Northern Territory Treasury Finance Officer In Training Program. Each year Northern Territory Treasury undertakes recruitment for graduates to participate in Treasury's Finance Officer in Training (FOIT) program.

Western Australia: www.gettingajob.dpc.wa.gov.au/index.html (‘Graduate portal’)

Australian Capital Territory: The Australian Capital Territory Graduate Program recruits graduates from a diverse range of backgrounds and disciplines. Email: psm@act.gov.au


Other Entry Points
You don’t need to join a formal graduate program to work in the Government Sector. Check relevant government job vacancy web sites to see the full range of job opportunities.

General public sector vacancies interstate are advertised on the following websites:

• Northern Territory State Government jobs: www.nt.gov.au (‘Government Jobs’)  
• Queensland State Government jobs: www.jobs.qld.gov.au
• Tasmanian State Government jobs: www.jobs.tas.gov.au
• Victorian State Government Public Service notices: www.careers.vic.gov.au
• Western Australian Government jobs: http://jobs.wa.gov.au/

EMPLOYMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government can be responsible for a wide range of economic, social, environmental, and community services such as roads, drainage, health, welfare, libraries, parks and gardens, town planning and building inspections. Councils employ a number of staff to carry out the decisions made by the elected members. South Australian Local Councils are one of South Australia’s largest employers with 9,000 people across 68 Councils.

Careers in Local Government

The careers available in Local Government are many and varied and because each Council is different, there are many kinds of staff in each. Large Councils employ hundreds of staff while small Councils may have as few as 20. For more information about Local Government in South Australia, visit the Local Government Association (SA) website for links to Councils and general information:
• www.lga.sa.gov.au/
• www.localstuff.sa.gov.au

Councils employ people with a variety of different skills, as given the breadth of services that they may provide, they need specific staff to carry out these tasks. Positions and disciplines range across: administrative staff, accountants, information technology officers, GIS officers, researchers, planners, environmental officers and more. Councils may also manage senior citizen centres and employ community relations/development officers, youth workers, volunteer co-ordinators, recreation service officers and crime prevention officers. Some also focus on local tourism, and may employ events coordinators.

Points of entry

To gain access into this sector it will be important to demonstrate relevant work or placement experience. Positions are usually advertised in the employment pages of The Advertiser or relevant metropolitan or regional daily newspapers. Some Councils advertise employment vacancies on their websites. Opportunities could also include temporary work, project work, and contract positions.

Sources of Local Government employment information:

South Australian Local Government: www.shapeyourworld.com.au (link to ‘Job Search’)


CouncilJobs Online: Australian & New Zealand Vacancies: www.counciljobs.com/
LGJobs is a weekly email service which lists positions available within the local government sector throughout Australia: www.lgjobs.com.au/

13. HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT....? OTHER STRATEGIES

Volunteering?
Performing appropriate volunteer work can also develop your employability and build your profile of work experience. Be clear what you are offering to do, and for how long.

If you are currently enrolled as a student at Flinders University
Check out our WorkReady Internship Program

The WorkReady Internship Program offers you the opportunity to undertake non-paid work experience placements that are part-time, degree related and project based. You can apply for vacancies that are listed with the program or you can gain assistance to set-up your own placement with an organisation of your choice. Insurance cover is provided to you and host organisations at no cost, this includes Public Liability and Personal Injury cover.

If you are no longer an enrolled student at Flinders University
Investigate volunteer opportunities at the following websites:
• Volunteering SA: www.volunteeringsa.org.au/
• Australian Volunteer Search: www.volunteersearch.gov.au/
• Seek Volunteer: www.volunteer.com.au/

Short-term courses
Consider undertaking a short-term course to update skills and develop new ones, for example through providers such as WEA, TAFE and so on.

Going Overseas?
Traveling overseas, be it for a holiday, working holiday or international voluntary work can also develop your employability. There are diverse options, from Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Summer Camp Counsellor, Nanny and Au Pair work and much more. Use the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre online searchable database and check out the International Outlook section on the Graduate Careers Australia website:
• www.graduatecareers.com.au/content/view/full/35
“If you are looking to travel, summer camp is an excellent way to start your holiday. While it’s a lot of hard work it is very rewarding and you make plenty of great contacts. Starting at summer camp first gave me a bit of traveling money, people to travel with as well as people to stay with all over the world!” Tara, Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology), Camp Counsellor – USA, International Exchange Programs: Tripp Lake Camp

“Life in Japan is great. I am living in Tokyo and the sights and sounds are amazing. There is constantly something to do and so much to see and experience. If you are looking for a job and are unsure of what to do with your degree, or just want to do something different, give this a try. … You can be as creative as your imagination lets you. The students are eager to learn and are quite motivated.” Greg, Bachelor of Business, Teaching English in Japan.

Use An Entry-Level Position To Begin Your Career
Consider part time employment/temporary work/casual work if the job seems right. It can be a way of getting a “foot in the door”. There are many jobs that are interesting and offer scope for career development but where a degree is not stated as an essential requirement.

For example some graduates may apply for administrative positions in the Public Sector, or entry-level customer service positions in a Bank or work in a Call Centre to gain experience and basic knowledge of their chosen field. They may then access on the job training, internal vacancies or other promotional opportunities, or even apply for Graduate Programs with the background of this additional experience (some, but not all, Graduate programs will take graduates with a few years work experience). For more information, refer to the handout: There’s More Than One Way To Start Your Career.

Further Study
You may also give some thought to the option of further study. See our handout Investigating Further Study for more information and ideas.

“Have a go. … Be willing to take a few knocks, don’t expect to win the first job you apply for, and more than anything always be positive. You never know when you’ll make a good impression on someone - and one day they might offer an opportunity and change your life.” Bradley, Bachelor of Business, Assistant Trader, ABB Grain Ltd.
14. LOOKING AFTER NUMBER ONE

“Have a go at the places you really want to work in, by researching as much as possible about them, and be prepared for knock backs, that should be taken constructively to do better next time. Start looking early, continue to watch the industry, remain enthusiastic, and seek help if necessary.” Nicoline, Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting), Graduate Officer, Department of Treasury and Finance

Undertaking job search can be demanding at times. Although it is easy to become discouraged your attitude is important. Regularly reassess your performance and job search strategies.

• Keep in contact with fellow students/graduates who are also job searching – go for coffee, encourage each other to be focused, motivate each other.

• Look after yourself - maintain a healthy balance between the time you spend looking for a job, and the time you spend on yourself. Ensure adequate and regular sleep, exercise and diet. Self-esteem is enhanced when we feel fit and healthy.

• Take time to establish or expand a hobby of interest. This will enable you to present yourself to employers as a well-balanced, active, and interesting person with a positive outlook on life.

If you do not get an interview, don’t despair, it doesn’t mean you are unsuitable for the position. Often it only means many applied and some were considered more suitable than yourself. If your application has been unsuccessful, you may wish to contact the employer to gain feedback on your application or interview, suggestions for your CV, for further skills development, and so on. It may be you were unsuccessful because you did not have the appropriate experience, not because you were not suited to that position. You could also ask the employer for leads, referrals, or even if you could undertake some work experience.

Remember your first job after university may be exploratory and be flexible about your first job. Think laterally - this may mean going beyond your original employment preference.

Build in job searching to your program of other activities; focus on doing, rather than worrying, and get others involved on your behalf.

“In the previous few applications before I got a job offer, I was getting fantastic feedback, but still coming second (and thus not getting the job). It is frustrating, but persevere, because it all works out in the end.” Jodie, Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) & Graduate Certificate in Health, Graduate Position, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
15. CONCLUSION

Use all of the options outlined in this booklet for tracking down jobs, plus any others you think of. Be imaginative! Don't limit yourself merely to the traditional and conventional approaches to job seeking.

Follow up several vacancies at one time. Do not worry this could lead to several interviews - you should not "put all your eggs in the one basket" but have several options from which to chose the most suitable one for you.

Don’t wait to apply for more positions until you have heard the results of the first ones, but constantly be alert for vacancies; send in the applications and contact the firms you are interested in.

RESOURCES

Video
A video illustrating creative approaches to job search is available to be viewed at the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre:

- **Can I have a few minutes of your time?** (21 minutes) – shows how an undergraduate uncovers the hidden jobs that never get advertised, and gains work experience.

16. SOURCES

We would like to acknowledge the input provided to us by Flinders students and graduates for this booklet, including comments and feedback on job search and casual work.

CAREERS AND EMPLOYER LIAISON CENTRE
Visit us at the Student Centre, Level 3
Tel: 8201 2832
Email: careers@flinders.edu.au
www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student

CRICOS Registered Provider Flinders University
CRICOS Provider Number: 00114A