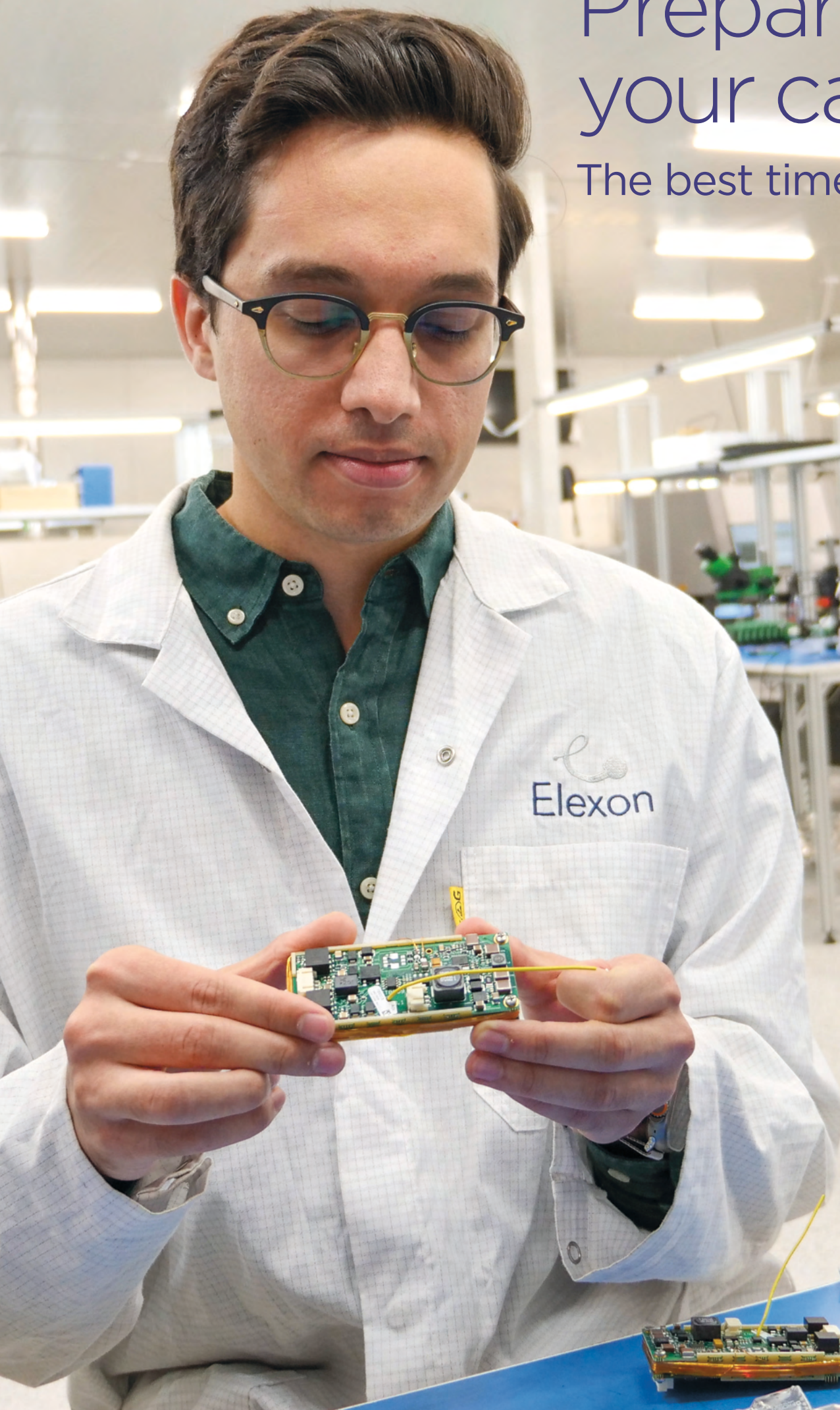


Employability and career preparation guide



Prepare for
your career.

The best time is now.



The EAIT Employability team

Our team is dedicated to developing your employability to get you career ready before graduation through:

- One-on-one employability consultation appointments (face to face or online)
- Assistance with job applications
- Resume and cover letter review and advice
- Interview preparation
- Professional practice guidance and processing
- Coaching on accessing the hidden job market
- Employability and career readiness workshops
- Employer led information presentations and workshops
- Industry networking opportunities

This guide has been created to help you develop your skills and knowledge to secure industry experience, an engineering professional practice placement, a vacation program placement and, ultimately, a graduate job when you finish your studies.

Contact us

Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology Employability Team

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Hawken Engineering Building (50)
The University of Queensland
St Lucia campus

Telephone (07) 3365 8534

Email employability@eait.uq.edu.au

Website eait.uq.edu.au/employability

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Understanding the job application process

The graduate market is very competitive and a degree is no longer a differentiator. When applying for graduate jobs your odds of success may be only three per cent. Thankfully, with careful preparation, armed with knowledge of the recruitment process, you will improve your odds of getting recognised and making the shortlist. The following is a summary of steps and interfaces you might encounter throughout your job application process.

Human Resources (HR): First, you need to understand the role of HR, which is responsible for the different stages of the employee life-cycle. This includes building and managing systems that recruit, train, motivate and retain a company's employees. They are also largely responsible for ensuring company values and culture are maintained. An incorrect hire will damage this and may

ultimately damage the overall success of the organisation so it's essential HR get it right. To help HR select the right candidate for the role, you may be required to complete a number of different assessment steps in the recruitment process. Being prepared is the first step to success so see below our step by step guide to the recruitment process:

Application deadlines: Most job postings have a closing date as the deadline for submitting your application. Make sure you apply by the deadline and include all the information requested such as a cover letter, referee details, and academic transcript. If you do not follow the application instructions and include all documentation that has been requested, you may be unsuccessful in this first round. Other steps in the hiring process usually begin following the closing date.

Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS): Have you ever received an email notifying you that your application was unsuccessful within hours of applying for a job? They may use an Applicant Tracking System. Some companies use this software to filter applications based on pre-set criteria such as keywords, skills and qualifications. Increase your chance of landing the interview using resume optimisation techniques such as including in your application the keywords found in the job advertisement, removal of images/graphics from your resume and ensuring there are no spelling errors.

The 6-10 second resume review: The human eye check will last on average only 6-10 seconds so your resume layout needs to be clear, concise and geared to sell your achievements. Your resume should be tailored for each separate application outlining your

Don't force the reader to search through your content to find the key information.

Include exactly what they are looking for in a clear and concise way!



motivational fit, education and key skills.

The telephone screening call: These calls usually occur unscheduled early in the recruitment process and are conducted to assess a candidate's motivation for applying for the job. It is important you have voicemail set up with a professional message recorded in case you miss a call. Telephone screens usually result in a pass/fail outcome as to whether you will move to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Top tip: Be prepared to answer the question – why do you want to work here?

One-sided video assessments: These are common and designed to reduce the time it takes for recruitment teams to assess a large volume of candidates. If selected to complete a video interview, you will receive an email inviting you to participate with a link to access the system and a deadline by which to complete. Usually the system gives you 30 seconds to read the question and up to 2 minutes to record your answer. If your answer is shorter than 2 minutes, resist the urge to keep talking - just move onto the next question. Try to stay relaxed, show your personality, and maintain eye contact with your camera.

Top tip: Test your webcam position, lighting, and background, and don't forget to dress professionally.

Assessment centres: Commonly used in student and graduate recruitment as an efficient way of measuring a large number of applicants, in multiple ways on a level playing field. Often lasting a whole day,



assessment centres are designed to assess your performance on the competencies required for the job. You will participate in a number of activities which may include a group activity, a written assessment, psychometric assessment and interview. All companies follow their own unique format and the best way to prepare is to do as much research as possible on the job, the company and your fit to their requirements.

Psychometric assessment: Usually issued online, you will be asked to complete a series of assessments which include cognitive ability (verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning and abstract reasoning), gamification, personality tests, skills ability and emotional intelligence. The best approach with these is to simply be yourself, not the person you think they want you to be.

Face to face interviews: The good news is, usually you only make it to this stage

if you have already performed well in the other stages. Interviews are usually on the company premises with at least two people in attendance; one from HR and one Manager from the relevant business area. Usually student and graduate interviews have a combination of standard, technical and behavioural questions.

Reference checks: Requested at the end of the recruitment process for shortlisted candidates. Choose your referees wisely and always call them in advance of supplying their contact details to make sure they are available, expecting a call and ready to give you a good review.

Top tip: Share the position overview of the role you are applying for with your referees, so they know what skills to highlight.

ACTIVITY

Choose a company you are interested in and complete some research on their job application process. You will likely find the information you need on their website. Try searching the company on au.gradconnection.com or au.prosple.com

What are the possibilities for you as an applicant? Vacation work/graduate work?

When and where do they advertise opportunities? When does the hiring process begin?

What is their selection process? Assessment centre, video interview?

What will you do to stay informed of opportunities? Set up job alert, sign up to company careers notifications, check website frequently?

Finding job opportunities

Where to look and how to connect

Did you know that up to 70% of jobs are not advertised?

Here are some tips to ensure you are covering all bases to find potential opportunities.

- Sign up for StudentHub job alerts studenthub.uq.edu.au
StudentHub also has a lot of great resources available to help you through your job search studenthub.uq.edu.au/students/resources
- Undertake the Employ101x MOOC (Massive Open Online Course). Be sure to use your UQ email address to register employability.uq.edu.au/about/online-employability-course
- Sign up to job alerts on main job boards seek.com.au careerone.com.au jora.com.au indeed.com.au
- Keep an eye on websites such as graduateopportunities.com.au gradconnection.com.au au.prosple.com for the dates key

graduate and vacation programs open as well as handy job related resources.

- If you are an international student and plan to work in your home country after graduation, set up job alerts and monitor the webpages of universities in your home country for vacation and graduate opportunities.
- Visit GoinGlobal and GlobalGrad which are comprehensive online resources that provides international career and employment information as well as international job opportunities.
goinglobal.com
globalgrad.uq.edu.au
- Check out Top Graduate Employers and Top Intern Programs for a list of the best programs as voted by grads/interns topgraduateemployers.com topinternprograms.com.au
- Use your network. Talk to family, friends, colleagues and peers. Who do they know? Continue to build your professional network by attending industry events.

- Create a good linkedin.com profile (with a professional photo) and start building your online network. LinkedIn is a great tool to identify key contacts in your industry. You can also set up job alerts and 'follow' organisations you would like to work for.
- Attend employer presentations, hosted by EAIT Employability. Often the industry speakers discuss upcoming opportunities.
- Get proactive. Research some of the small and medium firms you would be interested in working for and contact them directly – LinkedIn is a really good tool to help you identify who you should be contacting at each company (via phone is best). Often smaller companies don't advertise online or don't have formal vacation or graduate programs but may be willing to give you a go.

ACTIVITY

List 5 people in your network who can help you with your job search:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

List at least 3 job boards you will use to set up job alerts

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Tracking your progress

It's important you track your job applications using a tracker similar to the sample below, particularly when applying for many similar roles. A visual record of your progress with each role will help you to identify where you need to follow up. It may also be helpful to indicate which stage of the application process is particularly challenging for you. For example, if you are not progressing beyond the application stage, chances are there's something not quite right with your resume and cover letter and you may want to get some help. If you are unsuccessful, where possible, gather feedback on the reasons why and use the information to improve your next application.

COMPANY				
JOB TITLE				
JOB NOTES				
CLOSING DATE				
DATE YOU APPLIED				
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW				
FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW				
REFERENCE CHECKS				
OUTCOME				



Resumes

This is your sales brochure and you are the product!

Your resume is your chance to impress a prospective employer. It should outline your education, work experience, technical skills, interests and any other information relevant to the job.

When outlining your experience, instead of outlining what you were responsible for, outline the actions you took in the role – see Action verbs on page 10 and 11 for some inspiration. Employers want to know the **impact** you made so be sure to include achievements with each experience. Make your achievements stand out by adding metrics wherever appropriate such as percentage (%), monetary value (\$), numbers etc. i.e. 'Supervised a team of 6 sales assistants'.

Employers receive multiple applications so make sure that yours stands out by tailoring your resume just for them. One way to stand out is to tailor the statement/objective section at the top of the resume to show your motivational fit. Why do you want to work there? Be clear on this yourself before making any application and make sure to clearly articulate this to the employer.

Bullets versus paragraph layout? Your statement/objective should always be written as a short paragraph and many people favour the use of bullet points in their work experience section. However, if you find bullets tricky, it's perfectly fine to write a short paragraph instead and follow up with the bullet points in the achievements section.

Keep your resume formatting simple and streamlined. Only add graphic elements if you are applying for a role requiring creative input, such as architecture or design studios. Standard templates can be found by searching in Microsoft Word, and Behance.net is a great for design-focussed inspiration.

Top tips

- Try to keep to two pages, using bullet points to draw the eye to your achievements.
- Keep the formatting plain and simple. An Arial or Calibri font at size 11 or 12 is ideal.
- Be honest and accurate. Don't exaggerate your experience or qualifications.
- Focus on your achievements and the impact you have made.
- Proof read your resume. Recruiters have zero tolerance for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Use an appropriate format; in reverse chronological order showcasing your most recent experience first. If you don't have experience related to your industry yet, don't worry. Instead, tell them about what you have done in casual/part-time employment, volunteer work, assignments, team projects or extracurricular activities. Show them you have developed transferable professional skills such as leadership and communication.
- Review your social media presence! Recruiters and employers research candidates on popular social media platforms. Check your privacy settings on your social media accounts if you have posts you would prefer a prospective employer didn't see.
- Include your interests and extracurricular activities on your resume, particularly anything that reflects positively in relation to the position you are applying for. This is a good way to personalise your resume and present as a well-rounded applicant.
- Ask permission before listing referees on your resume, and give them a heads up that they may be contacted before every interview. This is a great way to check they are available to take the call.
- Don't use a photo. Privacy and anti-discrimination laws in Australia advise that you don't publish a photo on your resume. You should also leave off your

age, marital status, gender and religion

- Save your resume as a PDF document prior to submitting, unless the application instructions advise otherwise.

On your resume, include:

- Your name
- Contact details - telephone number and email address
- Education and training qualifications
- Employment history
- Evidence of relevant skills
- Achievements
- The details of two professional referees or "Referee details available upon request"





VMock - career acceleration platform powered by Artificial Intelligence

EAIT Employability have introduced VMock.

VMock is a career acceleration platform that is powered by Artificial Intelligence and can provide EAIT students with:

- Instant analytics and feedback on your resume – anytime/anywhere
- Resume templates and sample word-choice suggestions
- A resume score benchmarked against industry standards.

Receive instant and personalised feedback on your resume with VMock – the smart resume checker. It is free for all EAIT students.

Follow these simple three steps to evolve your resume using VMock:

1. Visit vmock.com/uqeait
2. Sign up for free using your student email in the s4xxxxxx@student.uq.edu.au format
3. Check your email for your account approval and access to VMock



Clare Lee

0400 000 000

clare.lee@uq.edu.au

www.linkedin.com/clare-lee

Don't forget to use a professional email address and add your LinkedIn profile account. If you have a github link it at the top of your resume also.

CAREER OBJECTIVE/SUMMARY

- A short statement to catch the reader's attention (2-3 sentences)
- Tailored for the specific job and company you're applying for – do not use the same objective for every job application
- Specifically outline "Why do I want to work here". Motivational fit is an important factor in the recruitment process

EDUCATION

The University of Queensland

Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Chemical Engineering
with a major in Environmental Engineering 2022 – Current
GPA: 5.5
(Expected graduation November 2025)

Achievements:

- Received Deans Commendation for Academic Excellence in Semesters 1 and 2, 2023

Brisbane State High School

2017 – 2021
ATAR: 88

Achievements:

- Member of the Student Council (2020-2021)
- Sports Captain (2019)

Although your work experience may not be related to the area of work you are applying for, it will highlight your transferable skills and experience such as leadership and organisation skills. Use action verbs to describe the actions you took in the role. Use achievements to show your impact. Where possible, use metrics to show scale of outcomes/actions.

EXPERIENCE

Bar Supervisor (Casual) Uni Bar, St Lucia QLD

June 2021 – current

Responsibilities:

- Ensured guest satisfaction through delivery of excellence in customer service
- Directed all bar service activities, ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations and responsible service of alcohol guidelines
- Trained, mentored and motivated new staff
- Performed opening and closing functions, including balancing the cash register
- Ordered and maintained bar levels of inventory ensuring the bar area was sufficiently stocked

Achievements:

- Received Star employee award December 2021 for securing an exceptionally high customer service rating of 9.5/10

Employment history should be listed in reverse chronological order i.e. most recent position first.

Undergraduate Process Engineer (Part-time) XYZ Minerals, Mackay QLD

November 2022 – February 2023

Responsibilities:

- Engaged and collaborated with the daily team safety briefings, adhering to health and safety standards
- Accountable for the monitoring and performance of process equipment
- Assisted in the analysis of yield optimisation and product quality

Achievements:

- Identified a process improvement during a safety meeting that was implemented by management to improve safety when undertaking manual handling tasks
- One of four members of a cross-functional team who streamlined the material movement process, increasing wrench time

Your resume should not be longer than two full pages.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Fundraising Volunteer Camp Quality

November 2021 – March 2022

Responsibilities:

- Inspired new supporters to raise money, while maintaining and developing relationships with existing supporters
- Organised activities, such as sponsored outdoor events and house-to-house collections of donated goods and money
- Developed new and imaginative fundraising activities, many of which involved organising events

Keep your bullet points short, succinct and easy to read.

Achievements:

- Due to new fundraising initiatives implemented in 2019, fundraising outcomes increased by 20% from 2021

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

President Chemical and Environment Engineering Society (ChESS)

January 2022 – Current

Responsibilities:

- Organised the ChESS Networking Skills Evening in March 2022 and collaborated with seven other members of the executive committee
- Liaised and had meetings with a range of industry employers within the engineering community to sign up and sponsor club events
- Responsible for meeting budget requirements and currently on track to achieve the sponsorship budget goal of \$2,000 in 2022
- Marketing and promoting club events online and through word of mouth to multiple stakeholders within UQ Engineering Faculty including: students, staff, academics and alumni

Achievements:

- The ChESS Networking Skills Evening was very successful and recorded attendance of over 15 industry representatives and 100 UQ engineering students.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Matlab, Aspen HYSYS and Aspen Plus
- MS Excel skills including VBA and Macros

Use a professional, easy to read font and ensure consistency with text size, font and formatting.
Don't forget to spell check!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Full, open drivers license
- Native English speaker, also fluent in German

REFEREES

Tracey Bell
Senior Process Engineer XYZ Minerals
0422 XXX XXX
t.bell@xyzminerals.com.au

Referees can be from paid or unpaid work.

You can simply note "Referee details upon request" if you are submitting your application prior to asking.

Improve your resume

Use action verbs

We have put together some action verbs that you can use in your resume to replace the standard bullet points which often start with the same words ‘responsible for’ which makes for boring, repetitive reading.

You changed or improved something:	You were an effective researcher:	You increased efficiency:	You managed a team:
Centralised	Analysed	Accelerated	Cultivated
Clarified	Assembled	Achieved	Directed
Converted	Assessed	Advanced	Enabled
Customised	Audited	Amplified	Facilitated
Influenced	Calculated	Boosted	Fostered
Integrated	Discovered	Capitalised	Guided
Merged	Evaluated	Delivered	Hired
Modified	Examined	Enhanced	Inspired
Overhauled	Explored	Expanded	Mentored
Redesigned	Forecasted	Expedited	Mobilised
Refined	Identified	Furthered	Motivated
Refocused	Interpreted	Gained	Recruited
Rehabilitated	Investigated	Generated	Shaped
Re-modelled	Mapped	Improved	Supervised
Reorganised	Measured	Lifted	Taught
Replaced	Qualified	Maximised	Trained
Restructured	Quantified	Outpaced	Unified
Revamped	Surveyed	Stimulated	United
Revitalised	Tested	Sustained	
Simplified	Tracked		
Standardised			
Streamlined			
Strengthened			
Updated			
Upgraded			





You communicated or wrote something:	You conceived and introduced a new idea:	You oversaw or regulated something:	You saved time or money:
Authored	Formalised	Authorised	Conserved
Briefed	Formed	Blocked	Consolidated
Campaigned	Formulated	Delegated	Decreased
Co-authored	Implemented	Dispatched	Deducted
Composed	Incorporated	Enforced	Diagnosed
Conveyed	Initiated	Ensured	Lessened
Convinced	Instituted	Inspected	Reconciled
Corresponded	Introduced	Itemised	Reduced
Counselled	Launched	Monitored	Yielded
Critiqued	Pioneered	Screened	
Defined	Spearheaded	Scrutinised	
Documented		Verified	
Edited, Illustrated			
Persuaded, Promoted			
Publicised, Reviewed			

You led a project:	You achieved something:	You had a vision and brought it to life:	You supported customers:
Chaired	Attained	Administered	Advised
Controlled	Awarded	Built	Advocated
Coordinated	Completed	Charted	Arbitrated
Executed	Demonstrated	Created	Coached
Headed	Earned	Designed	Consulted
Operated	Exceeded	Developed	Educated
Orchestrated	Outperformed	Devised	Fielded
Organised	Reached	Founded	Informed
Oversaw	Showcased	Engineered	Resolved
Planned	Succeeded	Established	
Produced	Surpassed		
Programmed	Targeted		

Cover letters

First impressions count

A carefully written cover letter that is tailored to the job you are applying for is an important step in the process of selling yourself to a prospective employer.

The role of the cover letter is to summarise your experience and highlight information in your resume that fits the requirements of the role. The best way to do this is to go back to the job advertisement, identify the key words and 'must have' requirements listed. The cover letter should leave the reader in no doubt that you are a great fit and they can go ahead and read your resume with confidence.

A well written cover letter should:

- Introduce you to the employer.
- Inform the reader about your skills and experience and what makes you the best applicant for the position.
- Show that you know about the organisation and have done your research.
- Be concise and to the point, explain why you are interested in the position and what makes you the best applicant for the role.

Formatting your cover letter:

- keep your letter to one A4 typed page
- font size 10-12
- font style: Calibri or Arial
- use plain business English, avoid using abbreviations, jargon or slang
- ensure your spelling and grammar is 100% correct
- be clear and concise, address one main idea in each paragraph
- ensure there is white space between paragraphs
- ensure the name of whom you are addressing is correct



Cover letter template

Clare Lee
clare.lee@uq.edu.au
Mob: XXXX XXX XXX

Day Month Year e.g. 10 August 2025

Recipient name
Position title e.g. Human Resource Manager
Company name
Street address
City State Postcode

Re: Position title of vacancy, reference no: (if available)

Dear recipient name

Paragraph 1: In 1–2 sentences, introduce yourself, outline your latest experience or qualification you are currently undertaking and tell them what you are applying for. Take the opportunity to grab the employer’s attention immediately by outlining some achievements or skills you may possess.

Paragraph 2: Outline your motivation for applying. The focus should be on why you want to work for the company and, in particular, in this role. If you are applying for a graduate program, it is especially important to outline your interest and understanding of the company due to the highly competitive application process. Putting it simply, in this paragraph, you are essentially outlining why you are interested in working for this organisation.

Paragraph 3 and 4: Outline any particular courses or projects you were involved in, previous work experience and any interests you have that are relevant to the position you are applying for. Outline anything else from your life experience such extra-curricular activities, groups or associations that could link your experience with what the organisation is looking for as outlined in the position description and which may contribute to their organisational goals. What similarities do you have with the company culture and direction? What differences do you have that would complement them?

Paragraph 5: This last paragraph should be confident, concise and decisive. Thank the reader for their time in reviewing your application, as well as reiterating your genuine interest in this role. Conclude by outlining the documents you have included such as your resume and transcript, re-enforce your interest in the position and that you are looking forward to discussing your application further. Also state if the employer requires any further information please don’t hesitate to contact you.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Lee

ACTIVITY

Select any job advertisement and practice writing a cover letter using the format outlined above.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

A tool to use carefully

Using AI to write your whole cover letter or resume might seem like an easy solution, but you could end up standing out for the wrong reasons.

Generative AI (such as ChatGPT) can help you customise your content quickly. But that doesn't mean the quality of work it produces will be better than what you can create yourself!

Nothing ChatGPT writes will be as strong and engaging as what a human could come up with. It is also obvious to hiring managers when you have used a generic AI cover letter and that won't put you ahead of your competition.

If you do decide to use AI to help you write your cover letter, remember to only use it to provide a draft that you can edit and personalise. Rewrite the draft to make sure it shows your genuine enthusiasm for a particular job and organisation, and highlights your own experiences and skills.

Be careful when using grammar and writing checking softwares that use AI as you could end up with a cover letter structured and written exactly the same as others using that software.

Here are some tips on what you should and shouldn't do when using AI to prepare your application:

Do:

- Use AI to research the company you're applying for
- Use it to structure the outline of a cover letter or give it a cover letter you've written to improve
- Feed it your resume and the job ad to suggest improvements and help you write a cover letter.
- Tell the AI tool what tone/style to use e.g. professional, informative, friendly
- When prompting, give as much context as possible
- Use the latest version of the AI tool
- Have a conversation with it. It's called ChatGPT for a reason, it has been designed around conversation and chat. Start with specific prompts and give it feedback after every output. Add your own specific experiences and interests in relation to the role and organisation
- Carefully review what the AI provides, including country specific spelling (United States English vs. Australian English) and company information
- Ask for suggested interview or follow up questions relating to the job
- Accept that it can only do so much

Don't:

- Use the exact same, generic cover letter in your applications that the AI tool generates
- Trust the AI to know everything - ChatGPT can have 'hallucinations'
- Keep inaccurate information about yourself in your cover letter - if the AI adds an experience or skill that you do not have, remove it or rewrite it
- Keep very over-the-top words in that ChatGPT likes to use - it will be obvious at the job interview that you don't usually use these terms
- Feed it personal data - Large Language Models (LLMs) use everything that's fed to them to learn from and can use it in a future output





AI resources

To better understand AI and its role in job applications, we recommend exploring a range of accessible resources.

Start by checking out beginner-friendly online courses such as:

- LinkedIn Learning – Students have free access to LinkedIn Learning where many short online courses are hosted including *Introduction to Artificial Intelligence* and *Getting Started with AI and Machine Learning*
- UQ modules – UQ has created a module titled *Artificial Intelligence* which covers a range of questions such as *What is artificial intelligence* and *Types of AI*

AI capabilities

There are a range of AI systems specialised to assist with different tasks, including but not limited to:



Information gathering
and drafting text



Creating images and
designing documents



Practicing and preparing
for interviews



Reviewing documents
for spelling and
grammatical errors



IN A NUTSHELL

Show your personality through your design and layout.

Don't be afraid to be bold!

Portfolio

A visual showcase of your work

A portfolio is commonly used in architecture, planning, or design as a tool to present and demonstrate your skills, design style and project experience.

It is common for architecture and design students to create a portfolio when they are ready to start applying for roles. A portfolio should be as individual and unique as you are, you should use the visual design of your portfolio as an opportunity to demonstrate your confidence, skills and strengths.

You can find examples and inspiration from helpful online databases such as Behance.net. Consider whether a digital or physical portfolio would be best and always be sure to have someone review your work before submitting.

Key elements

While you should look to express yourself, some key elements should be considered when designing your portfolio:

- keep your portfolio under ten (10) pages
- use landscape formatting

- use design programs (InDesign/Canva), not Microsoft Word
- use consistent formatting and graphics

What to include

Be selective about what information you showcase, but consider a wide range of options, such as:

- a range of projects to showcase your diverse skills e.g. technical drawing, content and finished design content
- additional hobbies, such as photography, that could be relevant to the role
- extra activities you have done while at university e.g. conferences attended, student societies you are in and volunteer work
- examples of specific skills the firm relies on e.g. hand drawing or model making

Finding experience

- Think about which scale of firms you want to be at and communicate relevant work
- Speak to people in industry, ask what they have done and tell people what you want to do
- Go to events and network with industry
- Be honest with your aspirations
- Review UQ options and support e.g. 30-day insurance cover for approved unpaid work experience

While you might not land your dream job straightaway, use these 'in-between roles' as a way to expand your skills, meet diverse people in industry and absorb as much content as you can. You never know where it will lead you.



Interviews

Make a lasting impression

You have done the hard work with your resume and cover letter and secured an interview, congratulations! The next step is to ensure you make the best possible impression.

INTERVIEW TIP

If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification to ensure you are able to form your best response.

Preparation

The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel which will lead to a better interview outcome. Reflect on what you know about yourself, the skills you possess and what you can bring to the job. Preparing your interview responses, and practising them out loud, will give you the best chance of articulating and presenting yourself well on the day.

Likewise, research on the company is a must. What do they do? Who are their competitors? What is their point of difference? Use tools such as:

- The company website – review core services, history, performance, corporate values and mission
- Media releases – important news and information about the company
- LinkedIn – research key people and employees in the organisation, the interviewer and where they sit in the organisation

As the interview draws near, plan your route to the location of the interview and give yourself plenty of time to arrive early. Make sure you know the name of the person you are meeting and their telephone number should an unexpected delay occur on your journey there. Plan your personal presentation carefully remembering it's better to be overdressed than too casual for an interview.

Body language

Sometimes our non-verbal communication can let us down. It's important to convey confidence in an interview setting and eye contact is an important component. Give natural eye contact with all interviewers, not just who is asking the questions (try not to stare). Be mindful of your posture, sit up straight and don't slouch. Have a firm handshake delivered with a smile.

Use active listening

An interview should be a two way conversation. Active listening confirms you are listening by clarifying or paraphrasing what has been discussed. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification to ensure you are able to form your best response. Remember never to interrupt the speaker, wait for them to finish before answering. Use the interviewers names at the end of the interview to thank them.

Practice

Role play your interview responses with a friend and book an interview practice session with an EAIT Employability Advisor.

Don't be afraid to take in some written notes and examples to use as reminders throughout the interview. Try to keep this to short dot-points to avoid reading a full answer from a page.





Interview guide

An important question to ask when you have been invited to an interview is what type of interview to expect. This will help you to prepare.

Behavioural interviews

A questioning approach the employer uses to find out about your past experience, your reaction in certain situations and the outcome. This helps them to understand how you will handle similar circumstances in the future.

Example: Describe a situation where you were working within a team and had to take the lead to ensure results were achieved?

The interviewer is looking for you to outline your competency in leadership. You will be expected to answer this question using the STAR model (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

Panel interviews

A panel interview is likely to consist of a number of key members of an organisation. Each member may have different agendas or priorities so it is important to establish rapport individually where possible and ensure you make eye contact with all members.

Unstructured interviews

Often presented as a casual chat over coffee, this type of interview is usually more informal and conversational with information being gained through discussion. Although this style of interview will appear more casual, bear in mind that your answers are closely monitored in order to determine your skills, attitudes, personality and cultural fit.

Situational interviews

Situational interviews are similar to behavioural interviews but the focus is on hypothetical questions as opposed to actual life experiences you have had. Questions are focused around skills identified as necessary to perform the role rather than past behaviour.

Example: If your manager tasks you with a new important project, but you are already working on many other things, what would

you do to handle the situation?

The interviewer is looking for you to give a detailed explanation of the steps you would take, highlighting your ability to multi-task and communicate effectively.

Assessment centre

This is where a group of candidates participate in various activities over a period of time, typically a half or full day. You may be asked to perform tasks in pairs or in a group, do role plays, give presentations, form groups and compete with other groups, have discussions and problem solve together. Assessment centres assess skills such as teamwork, leadership and communication skills. Your behaviour and performance throughout the activity is more important than the result of the activities you were involved in.



Common interview questions

An interview usually opens with the interviewer telling you about the company and the role. The interviewer will then work through a range of questions designed to help them identify your fit to the role. Some common questions are:

1. “Tell me about yourself”

The interviewer is trying to find out if you are a good fit for their company culture. You need to demonstrate in your response:

- Who you are
- What is your ‘X factor’/ what you do best
- Why you are a good fit (see Developing your elevator pitch on page 22)

2. “Why do you want to work here/what do you know about our company?”

The interviewer is trying to work out if you have done your research and what your motivation for applying is. You need to demonstrate in your response:

- What you know about the company and how it aligns with your values and passions

3. “What is your biggest weakness?”

The interviewer is trying to find out how honest and self-aware you are.

You need to demonstrate the following in your response:

- A truthful answer with an example. Use the opportunity to demonstrate your self-awareness, and what you are doing to address the problem.
- Always remember to finish on a positive
- Don’t try to make a strength sound like a weakness, “I am a perfectionist”, is not suitable

4. “What are your strengths?”

The interviewer is trying to find out if your strengths align with the company’s needs and if you can do the job and perform.

You need to demonstrate the following in your response

- A truthful answer with an example. Choose to outline a strength that fits with the skills they are looking for. Refer to the original job advertisement for this.
- Show how you are someone who will make an excellent addition to the team
- Don’t be humble, be proud of your strengths

5. Technical questions

Your research of the company/role will

help you prepare your answers to these.

6. Behavioural interview questions “Tell me about a time when.....”

Use the STAR format to structure your answers, page 24-25.

7. “Do you have any questions for us?”

Your chance to ask them questions that will help you be memorable. It is always a good idea to have some questions to ask.

As the interview closes, if you are really interested in the role, let the interviewer know this and that you look forward to hearing the outcome. Remember to also thank the interviewer/s for their time and for considering you for the role.

After the interview, reflect on your answers and think about what questions you answered well and where you could have improved. This will be helpful when preparing for your next interview. It is a good idea to follow up with a polite email after the interview to thank the interviewers for their time, re-confirming your interest. If you have not heard back from them after two weeks, you could look to follow up with a phone call or email and ask for some feedback.

ACTIVITY

Prepare your answers to the following common interview questions.

Initiative

Tell me about any new ideas or processes that you have implemented.

Problem solving

Tell me about a complex problem you have solved. Walk me through the process you took.

Leadership skills

Tell me about a time when you lead a group. What was your role as a leader?

Team skills

Tell me about a specific situation where you were able to help out a team member or colleague.

Time management

Tell me about a specific situation when you managed conflicting priorities. What did you do?

Building rapport

Tell me about a time when you have had to deal with a difficult customer/colleague. What happened? What was difficult about them?

Quick learner

Tell me about a time in your current role when you had to learn new skills quickly.

Developing your elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is a 30 second speech that summarises who you are, what you do and why you would be a perfect candidate. It's a short statement that will help you to introduce yourself in networking situations and will serve as the ideal answer to the interview question "Tell me about yourself"

ACTIVITY

Write your elevator pitch in bullet points and practice to get confident with your delivery.

Your aim should be to be personable and engaging, whilst answering the question 'why would a recruiter/company want to hire you?'

Who are you? Name, educational background, training

What do you do best? Your interests, career goals, passions

How have you made an impact? Your experiences, as it relates to the opportunity/network environment

What sets you apart from the competition? Strengths, achievements, your X-factor!

What are you looking for? If networking for a role, why would you be a good fit for that particular position or company





Using STAR-E in interviews

Situation – Task – Action – Result – Evaluation

The STAR-E model helps you to structure your responses to ensure you are providing a well-rounded answer that gives evidence of previous experience in a certain situation.

It's important that you answer behavioural interview questions using the STAR format, outlining a specific time something happened. Think of your answer as a short story with a beginning, middle and ending. Pay particular attention to the Action part of your answer, remembering to use "I" not "we".

The STAR model will help you structure your responses:

Situation:

Describe the situation.
When was it?
What was your position?

Task:

What was the task, what needed to be done?

Action:

What specific actions or steps did you take and what skills did you use?

Result:

What was the outcome that was achieved as a result of your actions?

Evaluation (optional):

What were the lessons that you learned or things you would do differently next time?

When you formulate your responses, ensure that you include:

- Your personal involvement/role if describing a group situation
- Outline the process/thinking you completed to come up with the solution
- Mention the rules you had to follow and how you managed this.
- Use quantitative results where possible

Example:

Q: "Tell me about a time when you had to lead a team to achieve a goal?" (they are trying to identify your leadership capability)

A: Situation:

"As part of the internship I did last year at XTYcom, I was working as part of a team of six developing a web platform for the first of a series of company website launches. We were confident we would complete the project to schedule but then two team members, including our team leader, fell ill."

Task:

"The team was suddenly under serious pressure to meet a deadline on which a substantial marketing budget had already been invested. We were required

to meet the original deadline with the smaller team and no formal leadership."

Action:

"I was up-to-speed with all aspects of the project and felt really confident in my programming skills through a course I'd just completed at uni so I decided to put myself forward as team leader for the remainder of the project. From my recent course, I was able to share my technical knowledge. On the leadership side, I had some experience from captaining a rowing crew throughout high school so felt well prepared. I knew from the rowing experience that keeping everyone in constant communication would be important so I arranged a daily team debrief over morning coffee. After speaking with the manager on how challenged we would be with a smaller team, I was able to motivate the team using incentives including a bonus on completion and two ordered-in Thai food evenings in the office for when we had to work extended hours. The incentives got everyone excited and kept us determined to succeed. The daily coffee catch ups were a great forum for sharing our challenges, meaning we could support each other so no one fell behind in the workload."

Result:

"Under my leadership the team brought the project in on time. The launch was a success. The team were congratulated on a job well done and I received a letter of recognition and thanks from the Manager. They have also indicated that I may be offered a graduate role."

Evaluation:

"On future projects I plan to formalise a redundancy process so that if any team members fall sick in the future we know exactly what steps to take next."





ACTIVITY

Prepare your answers, using the STAR-E format, to the following questions.

Q: “Describe a time when you had to give a teammate constructive criticism. How did you go about giving it?”
(they are trying to identify your communication capability)

A:

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

Evaluation:

Q: “Tell me about a time when you didn’t achieve what you set out to do. How did you deal with it?”
(they are trying to identify your resilience)

A:

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

Evaluation:

Networking

Attend employability events at uni and practice networking. It might seem scary at first but most people feel the same way!

You might find that you are usually very confident and chatty until entering a professional networking situation when suddenly you are overcome with nerves and can't think of anything to say...

Conversation starters

The truth is, most people feel like this. The trick is to have a few conversation starters up your sleeve to get things going and help you build rapport. Here are some of our favourites:

1. "Hello, what brought you here today?"
2. If you're at an event with food "I am loving these sushi rolls, have you tried them yet?"
3. "How did you hear about this event?"
4. "Isn't this a great venue? Have you been here before?"
5. "What did you think of the presentation this evening?"
6. "I've come to this event alone and these events make me a little nervous, do you mind if I chat with you?"

Talking points

Find out some background information:

- What is your career journey? How did you get to where you are?
- How did you prepare for your career and how did you get your first role?
- What was your university major?

Ask questions about their current position:

- What are the most interesting parts of your role?
- What do you enjoy about your current role?
- What does a typical work day look like?

Talk about your interest in the field and ask questions to help you understand more:

- What should I include on my resume?
- What advice would you give someone looking to enter the industry?

- Would you recommend any professional organisations I should be involved with?
- What strengths would it take to be successful in this area?

Remember networking etiquette:

- Don't just ask for a job, focus on gathering information
- Always follow up with contacts you make by sending a tailored LinkedIn connection request
- Thank them for their time and use their name in the conversation
- Always present yourself in a professional manner.

There are many great networking events to get involved in. Regularly check websites or social media pages for relevant organisations such as:

- Engineers Australia
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Australian Computer Society

Do's

- Be on time
- Use their name in conversations
- Dress appropriately
- Use your manners
- Eat and drink in moderation
- Follow up within 48 hours

Dont's

- Ask for a job
- Have a long elevator speech
- Scan the room while you are talking to someone
- Discuss controversial topics
- Gossip
- Talk while eating



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking site that acts as a means of making key connections that can further your career. It's your opportunity to create a professional career profile that looks appealing to hiring managers.

Getting started

Although similar in operation to Facebook, LinkedIn is strictly for representing your career endeavours. This professional networking site has over 800 million members, including business owners, CEOs, and HR professionals.

You can use LinkedIn to:

- **Search for jobs:** LinkedIn has its own job board where you can actively search for jobs, or set up a profile and receive notifications. If a job interests you, you can often apply using just your LinkedIn profile.
- **Grow your network and leverage off it to identify opportunities:** Use the search bar to find company names or job titles you are interested in. Look at as many profiles as you can and find people in your field of interest to connect with.

If you want work experience, why not reach out to the person and explain you found them on LinkedIn, find their career path particularly interesting and ask them if they can help you to find work experience? If they don't have anything for you themselves, who else in their network do they recommend you contact? Once you have this new name, look them up on LinkedIn, read their profile and repeat the approach explaining you have been referred from someone they know. You will be interested to know that many companies ask their own employees first if they know anyone that can fill a position before they post a job online. We know it's daunting to contact someone in this way but it does open doors.

- **Scout for companies you want to work for:** Many companies have their own business profiles on LinkedIn. Studying employee profiles, specifically those recently hired for the job you want, gives you a feeling for what types of people they're likely to hire and what skill sets and experiences you have in common. If your dream job is with this company, you can start to position yourself as an appealing candidate to hire the next time there's an opening.
- **Be found and look sharp:** To ensure you give yourself every chance to land that job, make sure you have an excellent professional profile. Having a great profile that outlines why you are the perfect person for the job is priceless. If a hiring manager does a Google search on you, give them something good to look at.

ACTIVITY



1. Set up your LinkedIn profile.

1. Set up your account using your most commonly used email address.
2. Set up your profile picture. A head and shoulder shot is ideal, use your phone in timer mode or ask a friend to help take a high quality photo. *Don't forget to smile so you look like someone others will want to connect with.*
3. Write your summary. This is often an underutilised tool. It's your opportunity to tell the (professional) world about who you are, where you are in your career and your goals for the future.
4. Check your headline, it's the most likely way you will be identified by others. LinkedIn will automatically default to whatever you are doing now but you can edit it anytime. *I.e. Bachelor of Computer Science 3rd year student seeking work experience summer 2019.*
5. Education – make sure this is accurate and up to date. You can add media or academic transcripts if you think that they will assist you to achieve your LinkedIn networking goals.
6. Work history – put everything on there. If your resume is good, you can copy and paste directly in to LinkedIn. *Yes, include those two years every Friday night you cleaned dishes in the local restaurant. Employers see reliability, commitment, teamwork, achieves results and good communication skills.*
7. Volunteer work – employers love volunteers so get everything in there and tell them what you did as a volunteer.

2. Identify 2 small/medium sized companies in your field of interest and identify a contact on LinkedIn who you can contact to build your network.

- 1 Company name: _____ Contact name: _____
- 2 Company name: _____ Contact name: _____

Mentorship

More than a chat

Mentoring is about developing a career relationship, one that builds your confidence and helps you develop a perception of yourself as a future leader within industry.

The wisdom, experience, network and leadership of an industry mentor is an extremely valuable professional relationship that often can continue on after you graduate.

If you are looking for a mentor, ensure you have the time, willingness and availability to commit to a mentor/mentee relationship. Plan, have clear goals and be prepared for your meetings so you can get the most out of your sessions! Most mentors volunteer their time to give back to the next generation of industry professionals, therefore it is important that you are actively engaged throughout the process.

Remember that your mentor may not always have all the answers – no one does. Don't expect your mentor to be able to give you hands-on industry experience, in reality, this isn't possible for some companies.

Use this opportunity to develop your confidence, knowledge, and industry network to grow your understanding of industry and to ask those hard-hitting questions.

The purpose of your mentorship should be to grow under your mentor's guidance, and begin bridging the gap between being a student and entering the workplace as a young professional.

Ways to find a mentor:

- UQ has a range of mentoring programs listed online aimed at different study interests, diversity groups, or goals mentoring.app.uq.edu.au/pages/programs
- Reach out to someone on LinkedIn that works for a company you are interested in, or who you met at a networking event.
- Searching for mentor programs online will show a range of paid and free options run by different groups and organisations such as:
- ATSE – Industry Mentoring Network in STEM
- Business Queensland – Mentoring in business
- Australian Institute of Architects – National Mentoring Program
- Engineers Australia – Mentoring Program



Your employability checklist

Tick them off as you go!



CONNECT



Update your LinkedIn profile and connect with industry



Sign up for university and industry mentoring programs



Join student societies, there are over 220 to choose from



Meet new people through sporting teams or special interest groups at UQ



Book a consult with an EAIT Employability Advisor to discuss your employability

CO-CURRICULAR



Get involved in summer or winter research projects



Join UQ Ventures for new entrepreneurship skills



Apply for the UQ Employability Award



Attend EAIT Employability events and workshops



Become an EAIT Ambassador and inspire the next generation of students



Get global experience

CAREERS



Complete work experience and internships throughout your degree



Record and submit your EPP hours and reflective journals on time



Complete the online Career Kickstarter modules to create your resume and cover letter



Start applying for graduate positions and researching companies of interest to you



Apply for scholarships every year



Develop and practice your elevator pitch

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