



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

2006

Science  
Information Systems  
Arts and Sciences  
Biomedical Science

# Gearing up for your career >

## Attention final year students – do you know:

- when large employers recruit?
- the peak periods for on-campus and on-line recruitment?
- what careers there are beyond traditional science and technology positions?
  - how to tap the hidden job market?

**If not, then read on...**

## Gearing up for your career in your final year – a timeline

### March

- > Graduate Employment Program (GEP) positions open for application this month; many close before Easter
- > Log on to **Careers Online** to view a list of graduate employment programs (local and international) – you can set email alerts that advise you when new positions of interest are advertised <http://careersonline.acs.unimelb.edu.au/cae/studentscae/>
- > Make a note of the upcoming events listed on **Careers Online** that you want to attend – employer information sessions, career fairs, **Preparing for Work** seminars...
- > Subscribe to Careers & Employment's jobs\_careers@unimelb email bulletin to keep up with events on campus [www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/](http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/)
- > Have a look at the program of careers fairs at the University and attend those that are relevant to your interests [www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/students/events/fairs/index.html](http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/students/events/fairs/index.html)
- > Virtual Careers Fair (online) 1st March – Friday 10th March 2006 (A variety of organisations seeking to recruit graduates participate)
- > Careers in Business Services Fair Monday 27th March 2006, 12 – 4pm, Wilson Hall (Accounting firms, investment banks, management consultancies, insurance firms, etc.)
- > Careers in Government Fair Monday 27th March 2006, 12 – 4pm, Wilson Hall (Local, state and federal government departments and agencies)
- > Careers in Industry & Technology Fair Tuesday 28th March 2006, 12 – 4pm, Wilson Hall (Engineering firms, IT consultancies, manufacturing firms, fast moving consumer goods firms, etc.)

### April

- > This month will feature interview preparation as well as applications and job search strategies
- > The **Preparing for Work** program is a series of free one-hour lunchtime seminars to help you prepare for the workforce
- > Employer Information Sessions are still running this month. More closing dates for graduate programs are looming.

### May

- > If you haven't had any luck yet securing a position, you might want to talk to the staff at Careers & Employment. They offer a diverse range of support services, so you will find the help that you need.
- > The Careers Resource Centre (1st Floor Baldwin Spencer) has a library of self help resources. While you are there pick up some information on personal Resume Review and Careers Counselling appointments (bookings essential).

### June/July

- > Look out for vacation work advertisements at this time of year
- > Final closing dates for graduate employment programs occur now.

### August

- > Employment Experience Fair Monday 14th August 2006, 12 – 4pm, Wilson Hall (Vacation work, internships, cadetships and cooperative year programs, working holidays, etc.)
- > Melbourne Education Careers Expo Tuesday 15th August 2006, Grand Buffet Hall, Union House (Schools, government departments, teacher recruitment agencies, peak industry bodies, etc.)
- > International Careers Fair Monday 28th August 2006, 12 – 4pm, Grand Buffet Hall, Student Union (International employers looking for fresh graduates that are returning home or planning to work internationally).

### September/October

- > International employers may advertise at any time, but this time of year can be when they're on campus, so keep an eye on **Careers Online** and the jobs\_careers@unimelb bulletin.

### November – March

- > Large-scale recruitment is pretty quiet at this time so concentrate on proactive job search strategies and other sources of advertised work – Careers & Employment can help! See also the 'Key steps to finding a career you will enjoy' section of this brochure
- > Immediate start graduate positions plus casual and part-time employment continues to be advertised on **Careers Online**.

## Skills employers seek – making the connection with your studies

Your science or information systems degree has already given you a wealth of skills that will be transportable into a range of workplaces over the length of your career (not just those that are science or IT-specific). Learning how to describe these skills to employers increases your chances of getting the job you want.

The skills you gain from study and work fall into two main categories – transferable skills (those skills that are key to a variety of industries and jobs) and vocational skills (relating to discipline areas you are studying; areas in which you have expertise). Your degree is training you in the following skills (think about whether they are transferable and/or vocational):

### Discipline knowledge

If you are looking for a career as a professional scientist, the education that you gain from each subject provides a solid knowledge base for the jobs that you will take on.

If you are studying a BSc, your course provides you with knowledge over a broad range of sciences, as well as a higher level of understanding in the areas you major in. If you've taken subjects from other faculties you also have an awareness of many other parts of knowledge.

### Ability to solve problems

As a science or information systems student, solving problems is your bread and butter – every time you conduct an experiment or find a technical solution, you are setting the stage for your own performance as an employee.

Science and Information Systems graduates have very strong cognitive abilities. Your studies require you to collate complex data and create solutions out of them effectively. By now you should be used to formulating hypotheses and testing their validity.

### Analytical skills

When you complete a piece of assessment you utilise the analytical skills you've been developing since first year. The complexity of many of your tasks means that you have in fact developed a rigorous critical approach.

### Teamwork

Your lab work has taught you how to work with others to a high standard on tough projects. You will have worked through issues such as prioritising tasks, managing a multiplicity of tasks simultaneously and managing time effectively.

### Communication skills

Clear reporting will have been essential to your academic success in your pracs, essays, presentations and other projects. You know how to communicate information and ideas in a professional and articulate manner, in both oral and written form (true!)

### Familiarity with work culture

Some of you may have conducted work for industry during your course, while others have entered a professional work environment with your pracs and lab work. Many students work part-time during their course to support themselves, and while you might not think much of these jobs; they are providing you with skills that will help you throughout your career. For example, customer service jobs will provide you with the ability to solve problems, to work in a team, to communicate well with colleagues and the general public, and a familiarity with work culture.

Similarly, extra curricular activities and involvement in different elements of uni life will expand your skill development.

Careers & Employment's free **Wise Up For Work** booklet explains more about these skills and how to articulate them to employers. You can download this publication from **Careers Online** ([www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/students/employ/wise.html](http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/students/employ/wise.html)) or drop into the Careers Resource Centre to collect your copy.

# Key steps to finding a career you will enjoy

Finding a career that you find exciting and satisfying is more likely if you undertake a process of self-evaluation. This kind of process gives you a clear idea of where you are going.

## Develop self-awareness

A good understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, and learning how to work with them, is crucial.

You should also clarify your interests – those relating to your studies as well as the things you enjoy doing in your spare time. These interests will suggest what type of work you will enjoy, the kinds of people you'll enjoy working with and which environments suit you best. For example, do you feel most satisfied engaging in an activity with others, or are you happier working alone?

Thinking about these issues will help you to define your work values. In all aspects of life it's your values that motivate you, work being no exception. What do you value – security? Travel opportunities? Using scientific research to help others?

Your friends and family can help you work through these questions because they can give you a different perspective. You can also complete a computer-aided career guidance package or speak with a careers consultant at the Careers and Employment office.

## Become familiar with the labour market

People who carefully consider both the industry and occupations they're best suited to tend to have more fulfilling careers.

- > Draw up a list of companies that serve the field you are interested in and research them:
- > Talk to family and friends that work in the kinds of fields or organisations you are interested in
- > Make use of the company information held in the Careers Resource Centre at the Careers and Employment office
- > Attend the careers fairs listed in the timeline section of this brochure. You will be able to talk to lots of different employers – find out about their organisations and the types of career paths they offer graduates of your course
- > Get on the internet and look at job information and profile sites, such as [www.careerthatgo.com.au](http://www.careerthatgo.com.au), [www.dewr.gov.au/](http://www.dewr.gov.au/) (Federal Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) and <http://www.science.unimelb.edu.au/current/careers/> to see what employment options exist.

## Network and get some relevant experience

There are many other ways to get amongst it in the industry of your choice: investigate work shadowing, volunteer work and work experience; look out for short vocational training courses; find out whether relevant professional associations have student memberships and join up. It's worth putting lots of legwork into networking as it can really pay off. Be proactive!

## Try informational interviewing

This is a recommended technique for career research whereby you talk to someone in your desired field about their career and the opportunities potentially available to you in that organisation or industry. The Careers and Employment office have some fantastic resources to help you master this technique.

## Consider further study

52% of science graduates undertake further study<sup>1</sup> beyond their undergraduate degree. This should be an option you consider if you wish to pursue a career in professional science or a highly specialised field. Honours, a Masters or PhD, Diploma of Education or other Graduate Diploma are all worth considering. See the 'Think Honours and beyond' section for more detail.

## Learn how to market your skills, qualifications and experience

Your studies and work outside uni have already made you a well rounded and appealing potential employee. Your next step is to know how to describe this in terms that match what employers are looking for (see the 'Skills employers seek – making the connection with your studies' section).

Preparing your application documents (cover letter, resume, selection criteria, application forms) and yourself for interview is vital to attaining your goals once you've set them. One useful strategy is to write a 'master' resume. This includes the fundamental information your resume should always have, so that you can then tailor it to each job application. The Careers and Employment office offers resume review appointments.

A great starting point to preparing your application documents and job interview skills is the **Preparing for Work** seminars that Careers and Employment run. These seminars cover important aspects of job-hunting, applications and interviews.

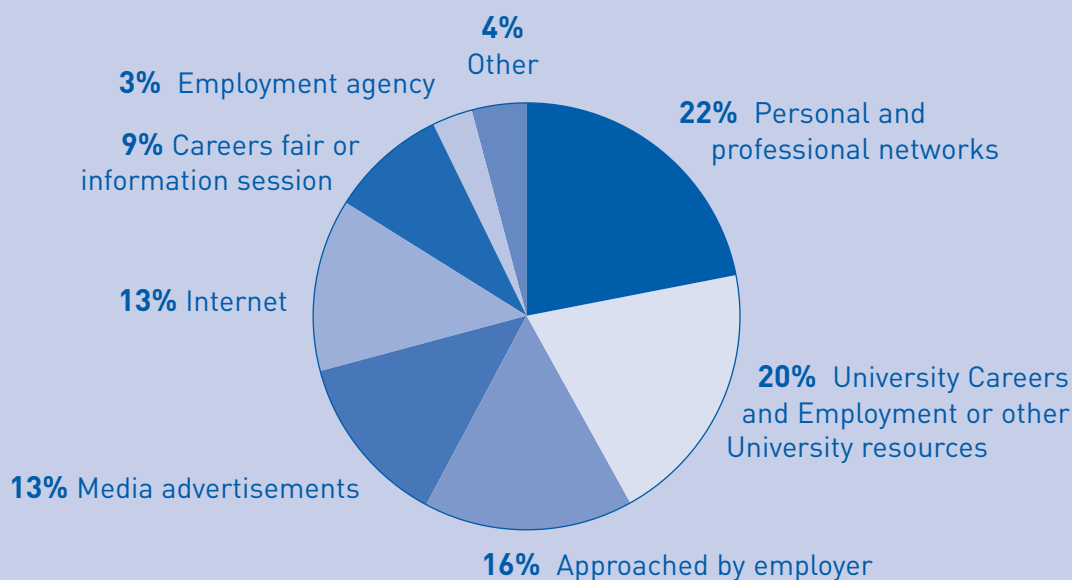
Keep in mind that the University, through the Careers and Employment Office, is there to help you every step of the way. These services are available to you during your first year out of uni as well.

<sup>1</sup> Graduate Destination Study 2004 - Table 13.1a - Main Destinations of Faculty of Science Bachelor Graduates.

## Our most recent graduates – the data

### How did previous science graduates find their jobs?

Source: Graduate Destination Survey 2004



### Industries that employed our science graduates (%) (All science bachelor degrees combined)

Scientific research/Tech services	12.8
Health and community/Hospitals/Other medical	10.2
Banks/Finance/Insurance/Property services	9.8
Manufacturing/Mining	9.8
Education	9.5
Legal/Accounting services	9.2
Recreation/Trade/Hospitality	8.9
Computer consulting/Computer services/ Data processing services	7.2
Construction/Consultant engineer	5.2
Government	4.3
Business and management services	3.9
Communications services	3.0
Transport services	2.0
Other	4.3

### Industries that employed our science postgraduates (%) (All postgraduate science degrees combined)

Health, Community services	62.5
Manufacturing/Mining	18.8
Banks/Finance/Insurance/Property Services	6.3
Education	6.3
Other	6.3

### Graduates in full-time work – classification of occupation (%) (All science graduates)

Business professional	32.7
Science professional	20.4
Clerical/Sales/Service	11.4
Health professional	9.9
Engineering/Architecture/Building professional	8.6
Other professional	5.2
Manager/Administrator	3.4
Medical/Science technical officer	2.8
Para-professional	1.8
Teaching/Education professional	1.5
Other	2.2

Source: Graduate Destination Survey 2004

## Think Honours and beyond – further study in the sciences

In today's job market, decisions about your career direction must include consideration of doing some study beyond your bachelor's course. In particular, if you want to pursue a role as a professional scientist then further study is a crucial stepping-stone. Completing Honours is the first step along this path, with the opportunities to get a job related to your area of study significantly increased by completing this additional year.

Honours offers a very different experience from first, second and third year studies. It allows you to work on your own research, often in a laboratory or research group with other higher degree students, and to develop stronger interactions with our academic staff. These opportunities help you to build up strong time and project management skills, communication and presentation skills, as well as a much deeper understanding of your study area.

There are other opportunities for further study that may suit your particular career direction or be taken up once you have had experience in employment. For example:

- > Master of Information Technology – an IT degree designed specifically for physical sciences and engineering graduates

- > Master of Business and Information Technology – a general grounding in both business and IT and available to graduates of any discipline
- > Master of Applied Commerce – a generalist business training that is ideal for anyone requiring business preparation in the early stages of their career

Information on all postgraduate courses at the University of Melbourne can be found at:

<http://coursesearch.unimelb.edu.au>. You can return for further study at any point in your career.



*Bruce Webber has conducted his PhD research in the Daintree Forest, Northern Queensland. Bruce's doctoral research focuses on the ecophysiology of a rare and little known rainforest tree, *Ryparosa*. Bruce has discovered that the species has unique chemical properties and life history traits that have been great for investigating plant defence mechanisms and plant-animal interactions.*

*Photo courtesy of Bruce Webber*

# Frequently asked questions >

## 1. Why aren't there many employers on campus that target science students?

Every year students wonder why there are few science employers on campus; yet every year the majority of science students find jobs that suit them and their interests. The science industries are very different from areas such as law, commerce or engineering, where there are some very large companies that each hire significant numbers of graduates each year. In the science industries, there are many small companies and they tend to take a few students each, often with specialised requirements – making it less worthwhile for them to individually attend on-campus fairs during the graduate recruitment cycle. This makes skills such as networking and industry research even more important for you to develop and use. And don't panic – the students who preceded you made it through to the careers they wanted – check out [www.acds.edu.au](http://www.acds.edu.au) for a report on the destinations of science graduates up to 10 years out from their degrees.

## 2. What are the prospects of IT grads securing employment this year?

Although the industry can be unpredictable, there are always opportunities for suitably educated and prepared candidates. The government website [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au) is particularly useful in researching employers and trends. All levels of government, large infrastructure organisations (e.g. Telstra, Electricity, Water, Roads) and large IT companies (e.g. IBM, Fujitsu, Honeywell) have extensive graduate programs. The IT section in Thursday's Australian newspaper is particularly useful, not just for advertised positions, but also for keeping in touch with industry trends.

## 3. The IT industry is constantly changing with many new positions emerging to meet the needs of industry. What types of positions should I concentrate on finding?

Ideally, the first employment step will be a graduate position, which will offer a wide range of experiences and a career development program. Obviously, larger organisations have more extensive graduate programs. However, you should assess your particular skills and abilities and search for a job that will use these, as well as build on other skills. Don't discount any position, with a large or small organisation, until you have researched the role and the company. Know your rights when applying for jobs, and don't accept poor work conditions and rewards just to secure a position. Come and seek advice from Careers & Employment ([www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/](http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/)) and contact relevant professional associations like APESMA ([www.apesma.asn.au](http://www.apesma.asn.au)) to get professional industry-related advice on a wide range of career related matters, such as employment contracts, salary advice, and workplace conditions and entitlements.

## 4. What if I don't have an offer of employment during the regular recruitment season?

There are loads of ways in which students find jobs and times at which they find them. The most straightforward way may be through the Graduate Recruitment Season in the first half of the year or jobs advertised in the papers. These only account for a minority of the successful job search strategies and may not be finalised until later in the year anyway. So you will need to keep your efforts up throughout the year, and as the year progresses you should really spread out the ways in which you are searching. And remember to network, network, network!

## 5. What if I'm still not sure what career I want to pursue?

Rest assured, that's quite normal. Normal, but no reason not to take action! Regardless of which career you eventually settle on, there are skills and qualities commonly requested by a broad cross-section of graduate employers, such as good communication skills, which you need to work on acquiring now. See page 2 of this brochure for the skills that employers seek, and remember that your career is a long process made up of a series of different jobs, some of which you won't have even imagined yet.