ECU
EDITH COWAN
UNIVERSITY

# Let's Get Ready

## Career Hacks

## What this Hack is about

A step-by-step job search guide to help you understand the Australian labour market, find real opportunities across the **visible** (advertised) and **hidden** (unadvertised) job markets, beat ATS filters, and build the professional connections that lead to offers. Apply these steps to **any study area**—from Arts to Engineering.

## Why this matters

- You'll learn where jobs are actually found (and why many never get advertised).

- You'll identify **keywords** and selection trends employers repeat in ads and screening systems—so your applications get seen.

- You'll use a repeatable plan to approach organisations directly and build genuine industry networks that surface unadvertised roles.

## Start here: Know your job market

1) **Clarify roles and pathways**

    - Use [ECU course page](#) (Career Opportunities), [Jobs and Skills Atlas](#) or [MyFuture](#) to map job roles aligned to your degree

2) **Scan ads to learn demand**

    - Browse multiple [Seek](#) job adverts for the same role.  Identify common **skills, tools, attributes and knowledge** for the role.

    - Note repeated keywords—these drive your resumé, cover letter, and LinkedIn development

3) **Mind the skill gaps**

    - If you see a recurring skill you lack, plug the gap with **free micro-credentials** ([LinkedIn Learning](#)), online and IRL volunteering, unpaid work experience, WIL placement or other extra curricular activity.

## Visible vs Hidden Job Markets (and why you need both)

- **Visible job market** = advertised vacancies with formal processes (common in large employers; expect ATS filters and structured panels).

- **Hidden job market** = roles found via networks, direct approaches, referrals, and "keep-in-touch" conversations—often used by small/medium organisations with informal hiring. International students: this is often **less competitive**.

## Recruitment patterns in Australia:

Large employers tend to use formal, advertised processes; small businesses commonly rely on word-of-mouth or hire people who contact them directly. More information here on how employers recruit.

## How to win in the Visible Job Market (Advertised roles)

**Platforms to trust**

- ECU CareerHub, Seek, WA Government Jobs, Australian Public Service Jobs, Local Government jobs, Prosple, GradConnection, Indeed and professional association job boards.

**Search smarter**

- Combine **titles + keywords** (e.g., "environmental data analysis", "field sampling", "impact assessment") many valid roles are titled differently. Adjust salary filters for **entry-level** employment if you have limited or no experience.

- Government roles: For those with limited experience typical entry after you complete your degree is *Level 3/4* (check eligibility: fixed-term vs permanent has different citizenship/visa rules).

**ATS reality & what to do**

- ATS filters screen for keyword alignment and simple formatting; Seek has in-built ATS features. Keep layouts clean (no text boxes, tables, graphics), mirror the **keywords** from the job adverts where you can **evidence** them, customise your resumé to the job/company for each role you apply for

**Application checklist**

- Tailored resumé + targeted cover letter that answers the employer's problems using evidence to demonstrate skills and competencies (projects, WIL, volunteering, part-time work). Proofread.

- Keep a tracker: job link, keywords, top three selling points, and the examples of how you have performed the skill in past experience (employment, voluntary work, WIL placement) for use at your interview.

# How to unlock the Hidden Job Market (Unadvertised roles)

**Why it works**

- Many small to medium sized entities (SME's) recruit informally—referrals, direct approaches, quick chats. Students who reach out **before** an ad goes live are memorable when something opens.

**Your weekly plan (repeat for 4–6 weeks)**

1. Build a list of 40 relevant organisations (discipline-specific) using Seek employer pages, Yellow Pages, LinkedIn, professional associations. Note size (SME focus), services, recent news, and contact email.

2. Send **10 concise speculative emails** per week, tailored to their work—attach your Resume. Follow up <u>once</u> after a week if no reply.

3. Book **1–2 informational interviews** with alumni/industry per week to learn, get advice, and stay on their radar (you are **not** asking for a job.)

4. Keep relationships alive—thank-you notes, occasional article shares, polite check-ins.

---

# Speculative email

*Subject:* Expression of Interest – Entry-level support in **[Function/Discipline]**

Hello **[Name]**,

I'm a **[final-year/student/graduate]** in **[degree]** at ECU and I've been following **[Org]**'s work in **[specific service/project]**. I've developed **[2–3 relevant skills/tools]** through **[unit/project/WIL/volunteering]**, and I'm keen to contribute to **[their focus area]** in an **entry-level, casual or short-term** capacity.

I've attached a short resume highlighting **[evidence]**. If appropriate, I'd value a brief chat about how junior support is typically engaged in your team and any **upcoming** opportunities.

Thank you for your time,
**[Name | Mobile | LinkedIn URL]**

---

# Build connections that lead to offers

**Your network map**: lecturers/tutors, classmates & alumni, past managers/colleagues, family/friends/communities, professional associations, meetups, volunteering. Start early; follow up; give value (share useful info); be specific when you reach out.

# Informational Interview

Hi **[Name]**. I'm nearing completion of my **[degree]** at ECU and am exploring career pathways in [target field/role]. I've been following your work and would really value the chance to learn from your experience.

Would you be open to a brief 10–15 minute conversation at a time that suits you? Hearing how you've navigated your role and the industry would genuinely help me make informed decisions as I plan my next steps.

If you're available, I'd appreciate insight into;

- *Which skills or traits matter most for someone starting out, and what's evolving over the next few years*
- *Common entry-level or stepping-stone roles in your area*
- *What helps a student or new graduate stand out to your team*
- *Whether there's anyone else you'd recommend I speak with*

Thank you for considering this — I really appreciate your time.

---

# Government pathways

- **WA Government**:  Consider **temporary registers** and **fixed-term pools**.

- **Commonwealth (APS)**: **apsjobs.gov.au** – look for graduate streams, pathways, and talent pools.

---

# Your professional profile (so recruiters can find you)

- Keep **LinkedIn** and **Seek Profile** aligned with your target **keywords**, WIL/placements, and volunteering. Recruiters search profiles **before** posting a job. Keep the message "on brand" across profile and RESUMÉ.

---

# Make every application count (Quality > Quantity)

- **Customise**: Mirror the ad's must-haves with genuine evidence of your matched skills and abilities  from your coursework, projects, labs, studios, clinics, internships, volunteering.

- **Structure**: Simple formatting, clear headings, no tables/graphics (ATS-friendly).

- **Proof**: Add outcomes, tools, stakeholders, and scale.

- **Proofread**: Eliminate typos; AI is a tool—always fact-check and use your own voice.

---

**International students – focus areas**

- Apply for **advertised roles** where eligible but equally invest time in the **hidden market** (less competition and faster feedback loops).

- Always check visa conditions for paid work type/ hours (and for any unpaid experiences).

**Keep momentum: weekly rhythm**

**Mon–Tue**: Scan ads (visible market), shortlist 5 roles, tailor 2–3 high-quality applications.
**Wed**: Research 10 organisations (hidden market); send 5 speculative emails.
**Thu**: Book 2 informational interviews; attend an event/association/webinar.
**Fri**: Follow-ups, LinkedIn updates, micro-credential module, reflection log.

---

**Useful links (Perth/WA focus)**

- **ECU CareerHub**: resources, events, jobs, appointments.

- **WA Government Jobs**: advertised roles, temp registers.

- **APSJobs**: Commonwealth roles & grad pathways.

- **Seek / Indeed**: broad advertised market + employer research.

- **Prosple / GradConnection**: grad programs & internships.

- **Professional Associations** (by discipline) and **volunteering / virtual internships** to build enterprise skills and evidence.

---

**Follow-up, referees & staying in touch**

- Send a short **thank-you** after interviews and networking chats; stay on the radar with relevant article shares.

- **References still matter**—line up at least one academic/practicum supervisor and one workplace referee; ask **before** listing them.

---

## Contact

careers@ecu.edu.au
ecu.edu.au//careers
careerhub.ecu.edu.au

## Careers Services Locations:

Learning and Career Hub, Building 31
City Campus: Level 4 – Kaarlak: 1N.420

Produced on 10 February 2026