

**Graduate Programs**

# Let's Get Ready

## Career Hacks

Graduate programs (usually ranging between 1 and 3 years in length) are paid, structured, entry-level development pathways that may include rotations, formal training, mentoring, and potential ongoing employment. They're competitive and organisations advertising graduate programs recruit well in advance, so planning and preparation are essential.





### Pro Tips

- You can usually **apply at the beginning of your final year of studies**, commencing your graduate program the following year.
- **Start early.** Many graduate programs recruit 9-12 months before the start date; set alerts and build an application calendar.
- Many employers allow applicants to apply up to **2 years post graduation, depending on requirements.**
- **Customise everything.** Tailor your resumé and cover letter to each role, mirroring keywords from the advertisement and/or position description, evidencing skills with concise examples (use STAR or SAO to help you do this). ATS tools screen for relevancy.
- **Research before you apply.** Understand the organisation, role, values, and job criteria to target your job search documents and interview responses.
- **Practice assessments.** Psychometric/cognitive tests, situational judgement, and game based assessments are common - practice improves familiarity and performance.
- **Track everything.** Use an application tracker.

## Graduate Program vs Graduate Employment

### Graduate Programs

- Larger organisations recruiting
- **Recruit months in advance** and hire for **multiple roles** in a variety of business areas.
- Often includes **rotations** across business areas, structured mentoring and a **formal development plan.**
- Highly competitive, structured, with formal and multiple recruitment processes including assessment centres.

### Graduate Employment

- Small to medium sized organisations recruiting.
- Hires as needed, often **immediate start**, hiring for **single roles.**
- Less formalised learning; **ongoing professional development** is largely self directed.

## Where to Find Opportunities (Perth & Australia wide)

Most graduate programs open in Feb / March. Government graduate programs are advertised throughout the year, with most advertised mid-year.

Nursing and Midwifery graduate programs open in February and Teacher Education graduate programs are open all year.

### Job Platforms to trust

- [ECU CareerHub](#)
- [Seek](#)
- [Prospire](#)
- [GradConnection](#)
- [A Place of Opportunity](#)
- [Australian Public Service Jobs](#)

Tip: Follow target employers on LinkedIn and set email alerts on the sites above to catch opening/closing dates early.

### Typical Recruitment Process (What to Expect)

- 1. Online application – resumé + cover letter and/or application form.**
  - Some applications require selection criteria responses or question sets.
  - ATS screening likely.
  - Application may also need to include your academic transcript and proof of citizenship/PR or full time working rights (check position eligibility requirements).
- 2. Phone/AI screen stage**

10–20 min informal check-in by phone or AI ChatBot screening
- 3. Aptitude testing**

**Psychometric/cognitive, behavioural/SJT**, and sometimes gamified tasks.
- 4. Video/phone interview**

Live or asynchronous; motivation and capability checks.
- 5. Assessment centre**

What to expect at an assessment centre: group and individual tasks; further testing; interviews.
- 6. Final interview**

1:1 or panel; reference checks may occur earlier or post interview. If you are unsuccessful, always request feedback – it is one of the quickest ways to strengthen your future applications.
- 7. Pre employment checks**

(e.g., medical, background checks)
- 8. Formal written offer process**

Not every organisation will follow the exact same process as per the example above. Some ask you to undertake written exercises, a case study or simulation exercises instead.

An example of a graduate program recruitment process with a large corporation [here](#).



### What Employers Assess (and Where Candidates Fall Short)

- **Most assessed skills:** communication, teamwork/ interpersonal skills, analytical/problem solving, time management/organisational, adaptability/flexibility/resilience, creativity and innovation, leadership.
- **Common gaps observed:** understanding the organisation, communication, commercial awareness, resilience and interpersonal skills.

**Action:** Map your evidence (projects, WIL, placements, volunteering, employment) to the skills above; prepare STAR stories and practice delivering them.

### Stand Out with a Clear Personal Brand

- **Decide how you want to be perceived** and ensure consistency across your resumé, cover letter, LinkedIn and interviews.
- **Show, don't tell:** use concise, outcomes focused examples tied to the role's competencies.
- **Where your brand shows up:** documents (resumé/ cover letter/selection criteria), online (LinkedIn), and in person (networking, interviews) and networking events and employer information sessions.

### Experience is Key

Employers value practical experience from internships, industry projects/WIL, placements, volunteering, and relevant paid work—these provide strong behavioural evidence.

### Application Documents – Fast Fixes (Resumé/Cover Letter)

- **Customise per role;** mirror keywords from the job ad/ position description and provide context for each skill.
- **Keep it scannable:** clean layout, white space, bullet points (6–7 max per section), sans serif fonts (e.g., Aptos/Arial/Calibri ~11pt).
- **ATS friendly formatting:** avoid tables, headers/footers, and heavy graphics; submit in **Word** unless instructed otherwise.
- **Proofread** rigorously; use strong action verbs; prioritise substance over style.

### Assessment Prep (Quick Guide)

#### Psychometric/online tests

- **Practice** with reputable providers; understand the format (e.g., numerical, verbal, abstract, SJTs, gamified).

#### Video interviews

- Prepare motivations and competency stories; practice on **Big Interview**; test tech, camera framing, and environment.

### Quick Checklists

#### Before You Apply

- Confirm eligibility (citizenship/work rights, graduation dates, disciplines).
- Research the organisation and role; align your evidence to their job criteria.
- Tailor your **resumé/cover letter**; get feedback.

#### After You Apply

- Log dates and statuses; schedule practice tests and interview prep.

#### Assessment Centre Day

- Arrive prepared; be collaborative; reflect the employer's values; show your thinking.

#### Final Interview

- Prepare role specific examples, thoughtful questions, and referees. Reference checks may occur earlier or later.

### Final Steps: Build Your Graduate Application Plan

1. **Self assessment** – strengths, interests, goals.
2. **Research & shortlist** programs that fit.
3. **Prepare documents** (tailored per role).
4. **Create a timeline** and track progress.
5. **Use ECU careers support:** **CareerHub** resources, workshops, drop ins, mock interviews.







#### Contact

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#### Careers Services Locations:

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

#### Find us at

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