

## GO NEWS

### Having Fun With Words – Writing Workshop for Ages 9+ with Katrina Nannestad

**Organisation:** Where The Wild Things Are Bookshop

**Location:** Where The Wild Things Are Bookshop

**Date:** November 8, 2025

Join us for a writing workshop with the amazing [Katrina Nannestad](#)! Katrina will take participants through a series of fun, fast-paced, risk-free writing activities to get the imagination whirring and to generate fabulous story ideas. The activities in this workshop are some of those Katrina uses in her own writing practice, and provide a taste of those included in her new book, *The Story Writer's Handbook*.

Age recommendation: 9+ yrs.

[Find out more](#)

### Future Events

#### Letz Live Webinar about Gap Years in the United Kingdom

**Organisation:** Letz Live

**Location:** Online

**Date:** November 11, 2025

Our sessions are a great way to learn more about the programmes we have on offer and the opportunities available to you.

Thinking of heading to the United Kingdom? Sign up to learn more about our School, Activity, and Hospitality Assistant opportunities. These online sessions will be held for residents of Australia, New Zealand, and anyone eligible for a working visa in the UK.

[Find out more](#)

#### Becoming a Protective Service Officer with the AFP – Online Information Session

**Organisation:** Australian Federal Police

**Location:** Online

**Date:** November 12, 2025

Gain insights into the role of a protective service officer (PSO), hear first-hand experiences, and discover what it means to do legendary work in the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

[Find out more](#)

#### Discover Creative Arts and Design at the Queensland University of Technology for Year 9-11 Students

**Organisation:** Queensland University of Technology

**Location:** Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove Campus

**Date:** November 18, 2025

Would you like your students to experience where studies in the Creative Arts or Design could take them?

QUT is offering students in Years 9 to 11 an opportunity to participate in hands-on workshops across the creative arts and design disciplines, giving students a taste of what a future career path in these areas could look like.

This full day program in Term 4 takes place at the QUT Creative Industries Precinct, where students will access purpose built teaching and learning spaces, while learning from QUT undergraduate students from the School of Creative Arts and School of Design.

**Teachers will need to register on their students behalf to attend.** Please note completing an Expression of Interest is not a confirmation of attendance at the event. You will be contacted via email with a booking confirmation or offered a place on the waiting list.

[Find out more](#)

## Career Conversations @ Home – Helping Parents Have Positive Career Convos!

**Organisation:** Arrive & Thrive

**Location:** Online

**Date:** November 19, 2025

Come join Tyson Day, the Co-Founder and Lead Facilitator of Arrive & Thrive, as he shares the best way to have impactful career conversations in and around your home environment that produce clarity, career discovery, and momentum. Tyson will share concepts and practices that he has learned through his 10+ years of experience in career education and the 85,000 students who have attended Arrive & Thrive workshops since 2019.

In our webinar, you can expect to learn:

- How can you positively influence your young person in their career decisions.
- How can you effectively navigate the future of work and understand your young person's options.
- How to communicate effectively through the GROW model to support your young person in career exploration.

We can't wait for you to join us!

All participants will receive a Career Conversation Kit to kick off conversations with their young person as soon as possible!

[Find out more](#)

## CQUniversity Online Chat Session for Future Students in November

**Organisation:** CQUniversity

**Location:** Online

**Date:** November 20, 2025

Are you thinking about starting a TAFE or university qualification in 2026? Or, are you eager to get started sooner and study a TAFE course in our December intake? If you're considering your study options at CQUniversity, you probably have a few questions about getting started.

Get to know CQU a little better at our November Online Chat Session on Thursday, 20 November at 3 pm AEST. All you need to do is head over to our CQUniversity Facebook page and send us a message during the session and you'll receive real-time answers to all your questions.

Our team will help you with information on your course of interest, pathway options, student support services, or anything else you might like to know about studying with us.

[Find out more](#)

## University of Queensland Go Borderless: Languages Experience Day for Year 9 Students

**Organisation:** University of Queensland

**Location:** University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus

**Date:** November 25, 2025

Explore the world of languages, creativity and cultures and discover what it's like to study a language at UQ.

What's involved:

- Experience a day at the St Lucia campus of UQ
- Hear from world-leading scholars from the School of Languages and Cultures at UQ and discover how languages and linguistics open doors to global careers
- Explore the rich connections between language, culture, linguistics, translation and interpreting – and where they can take you in the world
- Participate in fun, interactive and informative sessions and workshops covering: Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian (BULA), Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Linguistics

Who should attend

- Year 9 students who are currently studying a language at school
- Teachers

Each school is invited to register up to 30 students currently studying a language at school.

[Find out more](#)

## UCAT, GAMSAT and Pathways into Medicine – Webinar for Students, Teachers & Parents

**Organisation:** National Institute of Education

**Location:** Online

**Date:** November 26, 2025

This forum is an excellent opportunity for teachers, students and their parents to find out about the UCAT, pathways into medicine, and have all questions answered by an expert teacher who has been working in the field since 1999.

The session is packed with invaluable information during which we will be covering the following topics, and more:

- What is UCAT? UCAT scores? UCAT Sub-tests?
- Year 10, 11 and 12 - things to consider now
- The undergraduate selection criteria
- Application process into universities for medicine and dentistry
- When and who can sit the UCAT?
- GAMSAT
- Can you prepare for the UCAT?
- Undergraduate interview process
- What, how and why about Gap Year?
- Alternative degrees and career choices
- Work experience advice
- Q&A

[Find out more](#)

## Queensland University of Technology December Campus Tours

**Organisation:** Queensland University of Technology

**Location:** QUT Gardens Point & Kelvin Grove Campuses

**Date:** December 2 to December 3, 2025

Imagine yourself at QUT in 2026. Join us for guided tours of our campuses and community spaces at Gardens Point and Kelvin Grove with a current QUT student.

Registration is essential as places are limited.

[Find out more](#)

## CQUniversity Change of Preference Online Chat for Future Students

**Organisation:** CQUniversity

**Location:** Online

**Date:** December 12, 2025

Didn't get the ATAR you need or changed your mind about what course you want to study in 2026? We're here to help!

All you need to do is head over to Facebook Messenger and send us a message during our Change of Preference event and you'll receive real-time answers to all your questions.

Alternatively, you can call us on 13 27 86 to speak directly to a student adviser.

Speak with our expert team and discover your options at our Change of Preference event on Friday, 12 December at 9 am AEST. Get guidance on how to change your preferences and learn more about CQUni's alternative pathways.

[Find out more](#)

## SAE University College Change of Preference Online Session

**Organisation:** SAE University College

**Location:** Online

**Date:** December 12, 2025

No matter where SAE University College lands on your higher education preference list, our Change of Preferences Online Session will help you figure out exactly where you want to be.

Come vibe with us to uncover the real deal about who we are, what sets us apart, and where a degree from SAE could take you!

- Explore the hands-on work placement opportunities available throughout your studies.
- Discover the endless career paths available after graduation.
- Learn more about our scholarship opportunities, student services, upcoming Info Night and more.
- Ask all your questions about our application and enrolment process (no ATAR required!).

[Find out more](#)

## Australian Catholic University – Change of Preference Guided Campus Tours, Brisbane

**Organisation:** Australian Catholic University

**Location:** Australian Catholic University, Brisbane Campus

**Date:** December 13 to December 19, 2025

Attend a guided campus tour to explore what ACU has to offer, discuss your study options and pathways into ACU, and get personalised change of preference advice.

General guided tours typically last 30 to 60 minutes. Registrations are essential as places fill quickly.

[Find out more](#)

## Teachers PD: Engaging Minds in IT at the University of Queensland

**Organisation:** University of Queensland

**Location:** University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus

**Date:** December 16 to December 17, 2025

Join us for two days of hands-on, activity-based learning that will help you bring computing and digital technologies to life in the classroom. Explore practical applications of AI and computer science, while connecting with fellow educators passionate about the future of digital learning. Throughout the PD, participants can expect a wealth of valuable resources and will need to cover their expenses to travel to and from The University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus.

Agenda - two day course:

- Monday 15 December: Arrival for teachers coming from outside of Brisbane | 3pm onwards (AEST)
- Tuesday 16 December: All teachers | 9am-4.30pm (AEST) (optional dinner & keynote address 5pm - 9pm)
- Wednesday 17 December: All teachers | 9am-2pm (AEST)

Accommodation will be provided for teachers coming from outside of Brisbane at no cost to the participant (please specify that you will require on-campus accommodation in your registration. Breakfast included in accommodation).

Morning tea, lunch and dinner provided during the course (except for the odd coffee).

[Find out more](#)

## Indigenous Australian Engineering School at the University of New South Wales for Year 10-12 Students

**Organisation:** University of New South Wales

**Location:** University of New South Wales, Kensington Campus

**Date:** January 11 to January 17, 2026

The Indigenous Australian Engineering School (IAES) is an annual residential program, established and funded by Engineering Aid Australia. The program aims to provide young Indigenous Australians with exposure to engineering and other STEM principles as potential university courses and career paths.

Applications are welcome from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students who will be in Year 10, 11, or 12 in 2026 from across Australia (excluding Western Australia - students are encouraged to apply for the IAES program hosted by Curtin University).

The IAES is a fully funded residential program, covering meals, travel, and accommodation, making it completely free for students.

Application deadline: **November 9, 12:00 AM** (Midnight).

For any inquiries, please contact [eng.edi@unsw.edu.au](mailto:eng.edi@unsw.edu.au). The team is available to provide further information or arrange a call to assist with your needs.

[Find out more](#)

## Study STEM at the Queensland University of Technology this Summer for Year 11 Students

**Organisation:** Queensland University of Technology

**Location:** Queensland University of Technology, Gardens Point Campus

**Date:** January 12 to January 23, 2026

High-achieving Year 11 students entering Year 12 in 2026 can undertake a first-year STEM unit over the summer holidays. This is an intensive program delivered over two weeks with different units including lectures, discussion, exercises, lab experiments and assessment.

Learnings start with a face-to-face orientation session prior to the program commencing where you will be introduced to your unit and connect with your peers. Pre-class readings and activities before and during the intensive block may also be required for your unit.

The intensive unit will be led by our academics and assisted by current undergraduate students. Depending on your chosen QUT degree, you may be able to receive advanced standing (credit) for successful completion of your unit, putting you ahead of your peers and setting you up for future success.

Limited places are available in each unit. Students are enrolled on a first-come basis, and you will be notified if your preferred unit is not available.

**Applications close 31 October 2025.**

[Find out more](#)

## Galactic Innovators | School Holiday Program from BOP Industries

**Organisation:** BOP Industries

**Location:** Aviation Australia, Brisbane

**Date:** January 14 to January 15, 2026

What would it take for humans to live in outer space?

Over the course of this action-packed school holiday program, the Galactic Innovators program will see students stepping into the role of space pioneers as they explore what it takes to help humans live beyond Earth.

As scientists and engineers around the world work to send humans to Mars and beyond, they're facing big questions. How do we travel across space for months or even years at a time? How can we grow food, recycle water, and build sustainable habitats in places with no atmosphere? What technologies will we need to survive and thrive off-world?

In this action packed program, students will take on real-world challenges inspired by space exploration, from designing interplanetary spacecraft to building futuristic farms that could grow food on the Moon or Mars. Using big picture thinking and learning about the latest innovations from industry, they'll work to prototype solutions and present their ideas to a panel of space innovation experts.

With industry speakers, hands-on experiences and a tour of the Aviation Australia hangar and flight training facilities, students will leave this program inspired by the opportunities available to them in the future of the aviation industry. Whether you dream of becoming an astronaut, an engineer, or a planetary farmer, Galactic Innovators will leave you inspired to imagine life beyond Earth, and how you could help make it happen.

[Find out more](#)

## SAE University College Info Night in Brisbane

**Organisation:** SAE University College

**Location:** SAE University College, Brisbane Campus

**Date:** January 15, 2026

Just make the first move in your dream career – join us at your local SAE campus this January for Info Night!

This is your chance to get a feel for the vibe at an SAE campus. Explore our creative and technology courses, meet industry experts and chat to the campus teams about student life.

You can even take a tour of our facilities and check out some of the awesome student projects on display.

At Info Night, you'll have the opportunity to:

- **Get the Full Lowdown:** Dive into everything you need to know about SAE – from student support services and real-life experiences to industry placements and career pathways – all in a single, streamlined session.
- **Go Behind-the-Scenes:** Ever wondered what it's like to work with professional, industry-standard software and equipment? Tour SAE's state-of-the-art facilities and get a feel for the real-world tools and spaces you'll use as a student.
- **Meet Your Mentors:** Chat with our dedicated teachers, each a master in their craft. Gain valuable insights into our courses – not only from our expert staff, but also our alumni, who have been exactly where you are and now work in their dream creative and technology fields.
- **Chat 1:1 with SAE Experts:** Have questions about courses, financial assistance, early entry programs or scholarships? Chat with our SAE Course Advisors about the type of career you've had your sights set on – and how we can help you get there.

- See What Can Create: Get inspired by the incredible projects and creative work of current SAE students. This is where your own talent and vision can take you when you let curiosity lead!
- Feel the SAE Vibes: Enjoy an environment that's all about creativity and connection. This is your perfect chance to experience the SAE vibes up close and personal.

[Find out more](#)

## CQUniversity TAFE Careers Expo, Rockhampton

**Organisation:** CQUniversity

**Location:** CQUniversity, Rockhampton North Campus

**Date:** January 21, 2026

You are invited to attend our TAFE Careers Expo on Wednesday 21 January 2026 from 2 - 5 pm at your local CQUniversity Campus.

You will discover more about study options available to you, support services, apprentice and trainee information, and how funding options for eligible applicants may dramatically reduce the cost of courses.

Explore employment and training prospects in your local area by engaging in discussions with participating organisations.

[Find out more](#)

## CQUniversity TAFE Careers Expo, Mackay

**Organisation:** CQUniversity

**Location:** CQUniversity, Mackay City Campus

**Date:** January 21, 2026

You are invited to attend our TAFE Careers Expo on Wednesday 21 January 2026 from 2 - 5 pm at your local CQUniversity Campus.

You will discover more about study options available to you, support services, apprentice and trainee information, and how funding options for eligible applicants may dramatically reduce the cost of courses.

Explore employment and training prospects in your local area by engaging in discussions with participating organisations.

[Find out more](#)

## CQUniversity TAFE Careers Expo, Gladstone

**Organisation:** CQUniversity

**Location:** CQUniversity, Gladstone Marina Campus

**Date:** January 21, 2026

You are invited to attend our TAFE Careers Expo on Wednesday 21 January 2026 from 2 - 5 pm at your local CQUniversity Campus.

You will discover more about study options available to you, support services, apprentice and trainee information, and how funding options for eligible applicants may dramatically reduce the cost of courses.

Explore employment and training prospects in your local area by engaging in discussions with participating organisations.

[Find out more](#)

# Scholarships

## SSI Allianz Refugee Education Scholarship Program for Secondary and Tertiary Students

**Organisation:** SSI Allianz

**Location:** New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria

**Value:** Up to \$4,000 AUD

**Open Date:** October 17, 2025

**Close Date:** November 14, 2025

[Find out more](#)

## Murdoch University Indigenous Engineering Pathway Scholarship

**Organisation:** Murdoch University

**Location:** Western Australia

**Value:** Up to \$12,000 AUD

**Open Date:** October 5, 2025

**Close Date:** March 8, 2026

[Find out more](#)

## Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Scholarship for Rural and Regional Students

**Organisation:** Bendigo Bank

**Location:** Australia

**Value:** \$6,500 AUD per year

**Open Date:** December 1, 2025

**Close Date:** January 30, 2026

[Find out more](#)

# Competitions

## Science without Borders® International Student Art Contest for Students Aged 11-19

**Organisation:** Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

**Location:** All

**Value:** Up to \$500 USD

**Open Date:** October 20, 2025

**Close Date:** March 2, 2026

[Find out more](#)

## Anthology Short Story Competition 2026

**Organisation:** Anthology

**Location:** All

**Value:** €1,000

**Open Date:** September 1, 2025

**Close Date:** July 31, 2026

[Find out more](#)

# Weekly Posts

## Skills for Work

### Reading between the lines: What modern recruitment practices reveal about employers

When you're applying for jobs, it's easy to feel like the whole process is designed to test you - and in many ways, it is. But here's something that might shift your perspective: recruitment processes also reveal a lot about what employers value, what they're willing to invest in, and what trade-offs they might expect you to make.

Understanding these dynamics doesn't make you cynical - it makes you informed. And being informed helps you ask better questions, spot potential issues early, and ultimately find roles where you'll actually thrive rather than just survive.

A [recent article from PwC](#) about recruitment trends offers some fascinating insights into what major employers are thinking about when they design their hiring processes. Let's look at what these trends might mean for you as a job seeker, and what you should be watching out for.

#### **What you might encounter in modern recruitment**

Today's recruitment processes look quite different from even five years ago, and understanding what you're likely to face helps you prepare properly and know what's reasonable to expect.

#### **Video interviews are becoming standard**

Many employers now use video interviews, particularly in early stages. They'll often frame this as offering flexibility for candidates - and to be fair, it does mean you don't need to travel for initial conversations. However, it's also significantly cheaper and more efficient for employers. A company can conduct preliminary interviews with candidates across the country without anyone leaving their desk.

What to watch for: If a company uses video interviews exclusively, even for final rounds, consider what this might suggest about their commitment to the role or their workplace culture. Are they genuinely offering flexibility, or are they minimising investment in recruitment? It's worth asking whether you'll have opportunities to visit the workplace and meet your potential team in person before making a final decision.

#### **Automated screening systems**

Your CV might never be seen by human eyes, at least not initially. Many larger organisations use applicant tracking systems (ATS) that scan CVs for keywords, qualifications, and experience before a recruiter ever gets involved. According to various industry sources, some systems reject up to 75% of applications before human review.

What to watch for: If you're consistently not hearing back from applications where you meet the stated requirements, your CV formatting or keyword usage might be the issue rather than your actual qualifications. This isn't necessarily a red flag about the employer, but it does mean you need to be strategic about how you present your information. Research how to optimise your CV for ATS systems - it's a genuine skill in modern job hunting.

#### **Assessment tasks and "trial" work**

Increasingly, employers ask candidates to complete tasks, assessments, or even sample projects as part of the application process. Sometimes these are standardised tests measuring aptitude or personality. Other times, they're specific tasks related to the actual job.

What to watch for: There's a difference between a reasonable assessment of your skills and a company getting free work from applicants. A one-hour task that demonstrates your approach to problem-solving is reasonable. Being asked to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy, create multiple design concepts, or produce detailed reports without compensation should raise questions. If a task feels excessive, it's absolutely appropriate to ask about the time expectation and whether it will be compensated.

### **Multiple interview rounds**

It's increasingly common to face several rounds of interviews - perhaps a phone screening, a video interview, a technical assessment, and then in-person interviews with multiple people. Employers see this as being thorough and ensuring good fits on both sides.

What to watch for: While multiple rounds aren't necessarily problematic, consider what they tell you about the company's decision-making process. Are they organised and respectful of your time, with clear communication about expectations and timelines? Or does the process feel chaotic, with poor communication and constantly moving goalposts? A disorganised recruitment process often reflects a disorganised workplace. You're also investing significant time - if you're several rounds in, it's reasonable to ask about salary ranges and role specifics if these haven't been discussed.

### **Emphasis on "experiencing" the role before applying**

Some forward-thinking companies now offer ways for candidates to experience the role or workplace before formally applying - through office visits, job shadowing, virtual reality simulations, or detailed video content showing what the work actually involves. The PwC article mentions that 65% of candidates are more likely to consider a role if they can experience it through technology first.

What to watch for: This is generally a positive sign - it suggests the employer is confident in their workplace and wants to set realistic expectations. However, if you're interested in a company that doesn't offer this, don't be afraid to ask for something similar. Could you speak with someone currently in the role? Visit the office? Shadow for a few hours? Companies that are resistant to letting you see the reality of the job might have something to hide.

### **Decoding what employers are really looking for**

Job descriptions are filled with buzzwords and corporate language that can be hard to interpret. Here's what some common phrases and priorities actually tend to mean in practice.

#### **"Cultural fit" really means...**

When employers emphasise cultural fit, they're looking for someone who'll adapt to their existing way of doing things without causing friction. This isn't inherently bad - workplaces do need some shared values and communication styles to function well. However, "cultural fit" can sometimes be code for "someone like the people we already have" which can perpetuate lack of diversity.

It can also mean they value conformity over bringing in fresh perspectives. Pay attention to whether they seem interested in what you might bring that's different, or whether they're just checking that you'll slot in quietly without challenging anything.

#### **"Self-starter" translates to...**

This usually means they're looking for someone who can figure things out independently without much training or supervision. For some people, this autonomy is exactly what they want. For others, especially those early in their careers, it might mean insufficient support and mentoring.

If you see this term frequently in a job description, ask specific questions during the interview about training, onboarding, and what support looks like for new employees. A good employer should be able to describe how they help self-starters actually get started.

### **Experience requirements for "entry-level" roles mean...**

When an entry-level position requires one to three years of experience, employers are essentially saying they want someone who can contribute immediately with minimal investment in development. They're looking for candidates who've already made their mistakes somewhere else and learned from them.

This is frustrating, but understanding the motivation helps you position yourself better.

Emphasise any relevant experience you do have, even if it's from volunteering, university projects, or adjacent fields. And don't be put off from applying if you don't meet every requirement - many employers acknowledge their ideal candidate descriptions are wishful thinking.

### **Interest in your "passion" for the company suggests...**

Employers who place heavy emphasis on wanting people who are passionate about their mission or excited about their products are often looking for employees who'll go above and beyond without necessarily being compensated for it. Passion can translate to working longer hours, taking on extra projects, or being more flexible about conditions because you "believe in the mission."

There's nothing wrong with being genuinely interested in a company's work, but be cautious about roles where passion seems to be valued more highly than fair compensation or reasonable working conditions. Your passion doesn't pay your rent.

### **"Fast-paced environment" is code for...**

This often means busy, possibly understaffed, with frequently changing priorities. For some people, this variety and pace is energising. For others, it's a recipe for stress and burnout.

There's no universal right answer, but you should know what you're signing up for.

Ask specific questions: What does fast-paced mean in practice? How often do priorities shift? What does workload look like during busy periods? How does the team handle stress? Their answers will tell you whether "fast-paced" means dynamic and interesting or chaotic and overwhelming.

### **Common trade-offs that aren't always explicit**

Modern employment often involves trade-offs that seem positive on the surface but come with strings attached. Being aware of these helps you negotiate better and set appropriate boundaries from the start.

### **Flexibility and remote work**

The ability to work from home or choose your hours sounds brilliant, and for many people it genuinely improves quality of life. However, this flexibility can sometimes come with an unspoken expectation that you'll be available outside traditional hours or that you'll be just as productive at home as in the office.

The PwC article discusses using technology to create flexible processes for candidates, which can be genuinely helpful. But flexibility is only valuable if it actually gives you more control over your time rather than just blurring the boundaries between work and personal life.

What to clarify: When flexibility is mentioned, ask specific questions about expectations. Are there core hours when everyone needs to be available? How are deadlines managed? What does responsive communication look like? Is there a cultural expectation of responding to messages in the evening?

### "Competitive salary"

This phrase in a job advertisement often means less than you'd hope. "Competitive" doesn't necessarily mean good - it just means comparable to similar roles in the market. And sometimes employers have an optimistic view of what's actually competitive.

What to clarify: Always ask for a specific salary range early in the process, ideally before investing significant time in applications and interviews. If they won't provide one, that's useful information too - it might suggest the salary isn't actually very competitive, or that they're hoping to lowball candidates who don't know better.

### "Opportunities for growth"

Everyone wants to grow professionally, so this sounds appealing. However, sometimes "opportunities for growth" translates to "we'll expect you to take on increasing responsibility without corresponding increases in pay or support." Growth is only valuable if it's accompanied by appropriate recognition, compensation, and resources.

What to clarify: Ask what professional development looks like concretely. Is there a budget for training? Do people typically get promoted, and how often? What does career progression look like? Can they give examples of how people have grown in this role? Vague answers to these questions suggest "growth opportunities" might be more theoretical than real.

### "Wearing many hats"

This is particularly common in smaller organisations or startups. It can mean interesting variety in your work and the chance to develop diverse skills. It can also mean doing multiple jobs for one salary and being stretched too thin to do any of them well.

What to clarify: Ask which hats specifically they expect you to wear. How are priorities determined when responsibilities conflict? What support is available when the workload across multiple areas becomes unmanageable? The quality of these answers will help you understand whether "many hats" means genuine variety or unrealistic expectations.

### "Young, dynamic team"

This can indicate an energetic, innovative environment. It can also be a red flag for high turnover, inexperienced management, or an expectation that you'll tolerate conditions that more experienced workers wouldn't accept.

What to clarify: Ask about team tenure and turnover rates. How long has the manager been in their role? What's the average length of time people stay? Why do people typically leave? These questions can reveal whether "young and dynamic" means exciting or just unstable.

### What actually makes a "good" employee

Understanding what employers genuinely value - beyond the buzzwords - helps you present yourself effectively and also assess whether you want to be the person they're looking for. Most employers, when you cut through the corporate language, are looking for people who:

- **Can get up to speed with reasonable efficiency.** They don't expect you to know everything immediately, but they do want someone who can learn their systems and approach without requiring excessive hand-holding. This is particularly true outside of formal graduate programs where extensive training is expected.
- **Communicate professionally across different mediums.** Whether it's email, video calls, instant messaging, or in-person conversations, they want someone who can express themselves clearly, respond in appropriate timeframes, and adjust their communication style to the situation.
- **Accept and implement feedback without drama.** This doesn't mean accepting unfair criticism silently, but it does mean being able to hear that your work needs improvement

without becoming defensive or requiring extensive emotional support from your manager.

- **Show initiative on problems within their scope.** They want people who, when they spot an issue or opportunity, will either address it themselves or flag it appropriately rather than just waiting for someone to notice and tell them what to do. However, there's a balance here - they don't want someone who constantly oversteps or makes decisions that aren't theirs to make.
- **Stay reliable and consistent.** This means showing up (physically or virtually), meeting deadlines, and maintaining quality even when work isn't particularly exciting. Consistency is often valued more highly than occasional brilliance accompanied by frequent unreliability.
- **Adapt when priorities shift.** Very few jobs involve unchanging priorities, and employers value people who can adjust their focus and approach when circumstances change without becoming frustrated or rigid.

Importantly, none of these qualities require you to sacrifice your wellbeing or accept poor conditions. You can be all of these things whilst still maintaining boundaries, advocating for fair treatment, and expecting reasonable support from your employer.

### **Using this knowledge to your advantage**

Understanding what's happening behind the scenes in recruitment doesn't just satisfy your curiosity - it gives you practical advantages throughout the job search and negotiation process.

### **Ask direct questions about what you've observed**

If an employer mentions flexibility, describes a fast-paced environment, or emphasises cultural fit, ask them to be specific about what that means in practice. Good employers will appreciate thoughtful questions and give you straight answers. Evasive responses or corporate speak that doesn't actually answer your question is itself useful information.

You might ask things like: "You mentioned flexible working - what does that typically look like for people in this role?" or "Can you describe what makes the culture here distinctive and how new people typically adjust to it?" or "When you say fast-paced, what does that mean for daily workload and how priorities are managed?"

### **Assess them whilst they're assessing you**

Recruitment is often presented as a one-way evaluation where the employer decides if you're good enough. In reality, you're also deciding if they're good enough for you. Pay attention to how they treat you during the process - their responsiveness, clarity, respect for your time, and professionalism are all previews of what working there would be like.

Red flags during recruitment might include poor communication, repeatedly rescheduling interviews, being unwilling to answer reasonable questions about pay or conditions, pressuring you to make quick decisions, or being disrespectful of your current employment situation.

### **Request specifics about important factors**

Don't accept vague answers about salary ranges, working hours, growth pathways, or other factors that matter to you. It's reasonable to ask for concrete information before accepting an offer, and employers who are being fair should be comfortable providing it.

If they say salary is "competitive," ask for the specific range. If they mention growth opportunities, ask about typical progression timelines and examples. If flexibility is offered, ask about the specific parameters. You're not being difficult by wanting clear information - you're being sensible.

### **Don't oversell your passion**

Whilst you should demonstrate genuine interest in the role and company, be cautious about overemphasising your passion, especially if other aspects of the offer aren't particularly strong. Your enthusiasm shouldn't be used to justify lower pay, poor conditions, or unrealistic expectations.

It's completely fine to be interested in a job primarily because it pays well, offers good work-life balance, or provides valuable experience - you don't need to pretend every application is your dream role.

### **Remember your own value**

Modern recruitment processes can make you feel like you're competing desperately for scarce opportunities, but good employers know they're also competing for good candidates. You have skills, potential, and the ability to contribute value. That gives you more power in the process than you might think.

This doesn't mean being arrogant or entitled, but it does mean recognising that recruitment should be a two-way conversation about mutual fit, not a one-sided evaluation where you're just grateful for any opportunity.

### **The bottom line**

Understanding what employers are thinking and what their recruitment practices reveal doesn't make you cynical - it makes you informed. You can be positive about finding good opportunities whilst still being realistic about what to watch for and what questions to ask.

The best employment relationships are built on mutual respect, clear communication, and reasonable expectations on both sides. Employers who are worth working for will welcome your questions, respect your need for specific information, and treat you professionally throughout the process. Those who don't probably aren't workplaces where you'd thrive anyway.

As you navigate recruitment processes, remember that every interaction is giving you information. Pay attention to what you're seeing and experiencing, ask questions when things aren't clear, and trust your instincts when something feels off. You're not just looking for any job - you're looking for the right job for you.

## **Work Experience**

### **Work experience ideas for future engineers**

If you're thinking about becoming an engineer, work experience can give you a real sense of what different engineering fields actually involve. Engineering is a broad field with lots of different specialisations, from civil and mechanical to software and environmental, and trying out a few different areas can help you figure out which path might suit you best.

The good news is that engineering work experience doesn't always mean spending weeks in a professional firm. While traditional placements are valuable, there are plenty of other ways to get hands-on experience and build your understanding of how engineers solve real-world problems. Some options might be available through your school, others through local businesses or community projects, and some you can even do independently.

#### **Traditional engineering firms**

Many engineering companies offer formal work experience programs, especially the larger firms. Civil engineering companies might take you out to construction sites to see infrastructure projects in progress, while mechanical engineering firms could show you product design and manufacturing processes. These placements typically run for a week or two and give you exposure to the professional side of engineering, from client meetings to technical drawings and site inspections.

For example, [BAE Systems offers work experience programs](#) where you can get hands-on exposure to defence engineering projects. If you're in Queensland and interested in aviation and aerospace, [Helimods runs specialised work experience programs](#) that let you work alongside engineers on real helicopter modifications and aerospace projects. The application process can be competitive, so it's worth applying early and to multiple firms. Don't just focus on the big names either - smaller local engineering consultancies often have more flexibility and might give you more hands-on involvement in projects.

### **Trades and technical businesses**

Plumbers, electricians, mechanics, and other trades offer brilliant insight into practical engineering principles. You'll see how systems actually work in the real world, learn about problem-solving on the spot, and understand the technical side of installation and repair. This type of experience is often easier to arrange than formal engineering placements, and many trades are happy to have an extra pair of hands for a few days.

These placements also help you understand the relationship between engineering design and practical implementation, which is valuable regardless of which engineering field you eventually pursue.

### **Research organisations and universities**

Some universities run work experience programs or open days where you can spend time in their engineering labs, attend lectures, and talk to current students and researchers. You might get to see 3D printing facilities, robotics labs, or civil engineering testing equipment. This gives you a taste of what studying engineering at university involves and can help you decide which specialisation interests you most.

[CSIRO offers virtual STEM work experience programs](#) that let you work on real scientific and engineering challenges from home. These programs are particularly useful if you can't access in-person placements or want to explore multiple areas of engineering and science before committing to a specific field.

Contact universities directly to ask about opportunities, especially during school holidays when they might have programs specifically designed for high school students.

### **Technology and software companies**

If you're interested in software engineering, computer engineering, or any field involving technology, work experience at tech companies or IT departments can be incredibly valuable.

You might shadow software developers, learn about system design, or see how engineers troubleshoot technical problems. Even if you're more interested in other engineering fields, understanding technology is increasingly important across all engineering disciplines.

Many schools have connections with local tech businesses, so check with your careers adviser about what might be available.

### **Manufacturing and production facilities**

Manufacturers often welcome work experience students to see their production processes.

You could visit food production facilities, automotive manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, or any business that makes physical products. You'll see how engineers design efficient production systems, maintain quality control, and solve problems when things go wrong.

These placements help you understand industrial engineering, mechanical systems, and the practical application of engineering principles in commercial settings.

### **Local council engineering departments**

Your local council probably employs civil engineers who work on roads, drainage, parks, and public infrastructure. Work experience here might involve visiting project sites, reviewing plans, or understanding how councils manage public assets. It's particularly good if you're interested in civil or environmental engineering, and councils are often keen to support local students.

### **Environmental organisations**

Environmental engineering is a growing field, and organisations focused on sustainability, water management, renewable energy, or conservation can offer relevant experience. You might learn about water testing, renewable energy systems, environmental impact assessments, or sustainable design principles.

These placements show how engineering can address environmental challenges and might appeal if you're interested in making a positive impact through your future career.

### **Starting your search**

When looking for engineering work experience, start by thinking about which type of engineering interests you most, then research local businesses and organisations in that field. Your school's careers adviser might have established connections, and family friends or relatives might work in relevant industries and be willing to help.

[Engineers Australia has useful resources for students](#) exploring engineering careers, including information about different specialisations and pathways into the profession. And you can search for more [work experience opportunities in our database here](#).

Don't be discouraged if your first choice isn't available - any engineering-related experience is valuable, and trying different areas can actually help you make better decisions about your future specialisation. The key is to show genuine interest, be reliable, and ask plenty of questions while you're there.

## **University**

### **9 unusual degrees that could take you far from the norm**

When most people think about university degrees, they picture the usual suspects: teaching, nursing, engineering, business, law. But Australian universities offer some genuinely unusual and innovative programs that could lead you down career paths you've never even considered. These aren't your standard degrees. Some focus on emerging technologies that barely existed a decade ago. Others combine traditional fields in completely new ways. A few prepare you for careers that sound like they belong in science fiction. What they all have in common is that they're designed to meet real-world needs in rapidly evolving industries, and they could open doors to careers that most people don't even know exist yet.

If you're the kind of person who wants to stand out from the crowd, work on cutting-edge projects, or pursue a career path that makes people ask "wait, that's a real job?", then keep reading. Here are nine unusual degrees you can actually study at Australian universities right now.

#### **Bachelor of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Macquarie University**

At first glance, this might sound like a straightforward health science degree, and while it does prepare you for clinical careers like audiology or speech pathology, it also opens doors to some genuinely unusual career paths that sit at the intersection of linguistics, technology, and forensics.

The [Bachelor of Speech and Hearing Sciences](#) gives you deep knowledge of how humans produce, perceive, and process speech and sound. You'll study everything from the anatomy of the vocal tract to the neurological processes behind language comprehension. But here's where it gets interesting: this knowledge isn't just useful in hospitals and clinics.

Ever heard of forensic linguistics? It's a field where experts analyse speech patterns, dialects, and language use to assist in criminal investigations and legal cases. Forensic linguists might determine whether a ransom note was written by a native English speaker, identify the likely geographic origin of an anonymous caller based on their accent, or analyse threatening messages to build psychological profiles. It's the kind of work that combines scientific rigour with detective work, and your background in speech sciences provides the perfect foundation. Then there's speech recognition technology. As voice assistants, dictation software, and voice-controlled devices become ubiquitous, companies need people who understand both the technical side of machine learning and the human side of how we actually speak. People don't talk to Siri the same way they write emails, and developing technology that can handle accents, background noise, natural speech patterns, and context requires expertise in human speech production and perception. You could end up working for tech giants developing the next generation of voice interfaces, or for accessibility technology companies creating tools that help people with speech or hearing difficulties communicate more effectively. The degree also positions you well for emerging roles in areas like speaker verification systems (used in security and banking), voice biomarker research (where vocal characteristics are analysed to detect health conditions), or even entertainment technology where realistic speech synthesis is needed for games, films, and virtual reality experiences.

### **Bachelor of Film and Television at Bond University**

Film schools exist at plenty of universities, but [Bond's program](#) stands out for giving students genuine industry connections and hands-on experience with professional-level productions. Located on the Gold Coast, which has become a significant hub for film and television production in Australia, the program puts you right in the middle of a booming industry.

Australia's film industry has exploded in recent years. Major Hollywood productions regularly film here, taking advantage of world-class facilities, experienced crews, and attractive incentives. Productions like Thor: Love and Thunder, Shang-Chi, and various big-budget TV series have been made in Australian studios. This isn't some distant industry you'll try to break into after graduation; it's happening right on your doorstep while you're studying.

What makes this degree unusual is how it prepares you for the business and creative sides of the industry simultaneously. You're not just learning how to operate a camera or edit footage (though you'll do plenty of that). You're learning how productions actually get made: how to pitch ideas, secure funding, manage budgets, coordinate complex shoots, and navigate the increasingly global nature of the entertainment industry.

The program recognises that successful careers in film and television aren't just about being a director or cinematographer. You might become a producer who identifies promising projects and shepherds them from concept to screen. You could work as a screenwriter developing content for streaming platforms that are desperate for fresh, engaging stories. Or you might find yourself in newer roles that barely existed a decade ago, like a content strategist for a streaming service, a virtual production specialist working with LED volume stages (the technology used in shows like The Mandalorian), or a creative executive developing content for emerging platforms.

The practical, industry-focused nature of the program means you graduate with not just knowledge, but a portfolio of actual work, industry contacts, and experience working on real productions. In an industry where who you know and what you've done matter as much as what you studied, this hands-on approach is invaluable.

### **Bachelor of Data Analytics (FinTech major) at Murdoch University**

Financial technology has transformed from a niche specialisation into one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing sectors globally, and Murdoch's [FinTech major](#) within their Bachelor of Data Analytics positions you right at the forefront of this revolution.

This isn't your traditional finance degree. Instead of focusing primarily on accounting principles and investment strategies, you're learning how technology is fundamentally reshaping every aspect of the financial world. We're talking about blockchain technology that could revolutionise everything from international money transfers to property ownership records. Artificial intelligence that can analyse market trends, detect fraud, assess credit risk, and even provide personalised financial advice. Quantum computing that might crack currently "unbreakable" encryption systems, forcing the entire financial sector to rethink security. The degree combines data analytics skills with financial knowledge and cutting-edge technology. You're not just learning what blockchain is; you're learning how to build applications that use it. You're not just understanding AI in theory; you're developing machine learning models that could actually be deployed in real financial systems. This practical, hands-on approach means you graduate with skills that are immediately valuable to employers. Career opportunities in FinTech are genuinely diverse and often highly paid. You might work as a blockchain developer for a cryptocurrency exchange, building the infrastructure that handles billions of dollars in transactions. You could become a quantitative analyst using machine learning to develop trading algorithms for investment firms. There are roles in cybersecurity protecting financial systems from increasingly sophisticated attacks, positions in regulatory technology (RegTech) helping financial institutions comply with complex regulations using automated systems, or jobs with central banks exploring digital currencies. You might even end up working for a completely new type of company that doesn't fit traditional categories. Consider "neobanks" that exist entirely online with no physical branches, or "peer-to-peer" lending platforms that connect borrowers directly with lenders, cutting out traditional banks entirely. These businesses need people who understand both the financial and technological sides of what they're doing, which is exactly what this degree provides. The financial sector is also increasingly focused on financial inclusion—using technology to provide banking and financial services to people who've traditionally been excluded from the system. You could work on projects developing mobile payment systems for developing countries, creating microfinance platforms, or building financial literacy tools. The combination of technical skills and financial knowledge opens doors to work that's not just well-paid, but genuinely meaningful.

### **Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) - Internet of Things Engineering at James Cook University**

The Internet of Things sounds abstract until you realise it's already everywhere around you. Your smart watch monitoring your heart rate, traffic lights that adjust timing based on congestion, farming equipment that waters crops only when soil moisture drops below optimal levels, industrial machinery that predicts its own maintenance needs—all of these are IoT devices, and someone needs to design, build, and maintain them.

What makes [JCU's IoT Engineering degree](#) unusual is that it's not primarily a software development program. Yes, you'll learn programming and how to work with data, but the focus is much more on the physical side: sensors, hardware, robotics, and the systems that connect everything together. You're learning how to build the actual devices that sense, communicate, and act in the real world.

This hands-on engineering focus means you're working with actual hardware throughout your degree. You might design a sensor network for monitoring environmental conditions, build a prototype for an autonomous agricultural robot, or create a smart home system from scratch. These aren't just theoretical exercises; you're developing practical skills that transfer directly to industry.

The career possibilities are genuinely exciting because IoT is transforming virtually every industry. In agriculture, IoT devices are enabling precision farming where every plant gets exactly the water, nutrients, and attention it needs, reducing waste and increasing yields. You

could work developing agricultural technology that helps farmers be more sustainable and productive, possibly even helping address global food security challenges.

Smart cities represent another huge opportunity. As urban populations grow, cities need to become more efficient, sustainable, and liveable. This requires thousands of connected devices managing everything from traffic flow to waste collection to energy distribution. You might design systems that reduce traffic congestion, develop technology for smarter public transport, or create environmental monitoring networks that help cities respond to pollution or extreme weather.

Healthcare is being transformed by wearable devices and remote monitoring systems that allow doctors to track patients' health in real-time. You could develop medical devices, create monitoring systems for aged care facilities, or build health tracking technology that helps people manage chronic conditions more effectively.

There are also emerging fields that barely exist yet. What about underwater sensor networks for monitoring ocean health? Wearable technology for athletes that provides real-time biomechanical feedback? Smart clothing that monitors health conditions? Sensor systems for space exploration? The IoT field is still in its relative infancy, which means there's genuine opportunity to be part of creating entirely new applications and industries.

### **Bachelor of Fashion (Sustainability) at RMIT**

Fashion has an image problem, and not the kind that a good designer can fix. The industry is one of the world's biggest polluters, a major contributor to waste, and has significant ethical issues around labour practices. But rather than abandoning the field, forward-thinking designers and technologists are reinventing it, and [RMIT's Bachelor of Fashion \(Sustainability\)](#) puts you right at the forefront of this transformation.

This isn't a traditional fashion design degree with a bit of sustainability content tacked on. The entire program is built around reimagining fashion from the ground up. You're not just learning to design clothes; you're learning to rethink materials, production processes, business models, and the entire lifecycle of garments from creation to disposal (or ideally, reuse and recycling).

The materials side alone opens up fascinating career possibilities. Smart textiles represent a growing field where fabrics don't just look good but actually do things: clothing that monitors your health, fabrics that change colour or pattern, materials that regulate temperature, or even garments that charge your devices. You might work as a materials engineer developing the next generation of sustainable, high-performance fabrics, possibly using innovative materials like lab-grown leather, textiles made from recycled ocean plastic, or biodegradable alternatives to synthetic fibres.

Then there's the emerging world of digital fashion. People are already buying virtual clothing for their online avatars in games and virtual worlds. Fashion brands are creating digital collections that exist only in 3D. You could work in 3D fashion design creating virtual garments, develop technology for virtual try-on systems that reduce returns in online shopping, or even design for augmented reality where digital clothing appears overlaid on real bodies through your phone or AR glasses.

The circular economy represents another significant career path. Instead of the traditional linear model where clothes are made, worn briefly, then discarded, circular fashion focuses on designing for longevity, repairability, and eventual recycling. You might work for brands developing rental or resale platforms, create systems for recycling textile waste back into new materials, or design modular clothing that can be updated or repaired rather than replaced.

There are also roles emerging in fashion technology and supply chain innovation. Blockchain technology is being used to provide transparency about where and how clothes are made. AI is being used to predict trends and optimise production to reduce waste. You could work on technology solutions that make fashion more transparent, efficient, and ethical.

Perhaps most importantly, you could simply work as a designer, brand manager, or entrepreneur who actually understands how to create fashion that doesn't cost the earth. As consumers increasingly demand sustainable options and regulations around environmental impact tighten, brands desperately need people who can deliver fashion that's both appealing and responsible. That's a skillset that will only become more valuable.

### **Bachelor of Outdoor Leadership at Victoria University**

If the idea of spending your degree in outdoor laboratories rather than lecture theatres appeals to you, VU's [Bachelor of Outdoor Leadership](#) offers something genuinely different. This degree recognises that outdoor education and experiences are significant industries that need professionally trained leaders, not just enthusiastic amateurs.

What makes this program particularly unusual is its structure and approach. You're not just reading about leadership theory or watching videos of outdoor activities. You're actually out there—in national parks, on rivers, in the wilderness—developing practical skills and genuine expertise. The program includes a paid internship, which means you're not just gaining experience; you're earning money while studying and building industry connections that could lead directly to employment.

The outdoor education sector is larger and more diverse than many people realise. Schools increasingly recognise the value of outdoor education programs that take students outside the classroom to develop resilience, teamwork, problem-solving skills, and environmental awareness. You could work for a school running their outdoor education program, developing and leading camps, expeditions, and challenge-based learning activities that genuinely transform students' capabilities and confidence.

Then there's the growing outdoor recreation and adventure tourism industry. Australia's natural environment is one of our greatest assets, and both domestic and international visitors are eager to experience it. You might work for a tour company leading hiking expeditions, running kayaking or rafting trips, or facilitating adventure experiences. These aren't minimum-wage seasonal jobs (though they can start that way); experienced outdoor leaders with proper qualifications and business skills can earn good money running their own guiding businesses or managing operations for major adventure tourism companies.

Corporate and professional development represents another significant opportunity. Many companies use outdoor challenge programs for team building, leadership development, and organisational change initiatives. You could work facilitating these programs, designing experiences that help corporate teams develop better communication and collaboration, or running leadership development courses that use outdoor challenges as a vehicle for personal growth.

Youth development organisations like Scouts, outdoor education centres, and youth leadership programs all need qualified staff. There are also opportunities in therapeutic and rehabilitation programs that use outdoor activities to support people dealing with mental health challenges, addiction recovery, or reintegration after incarceration. The evidence base for the benefits of nature-based interventions is growing, creating opportunities for people who can deliver these programs professionally.

You might even carve out more unusual niches: leading wilderness expeditions for photographers or artists, running outdoor programs for people with disabilities, developing outdoor education curricula and resources, or working in environmental education and conservation programs. The skills you develop—leadership, risk management, environmental knowledge, communication, and the ability to keep people safe and engaged in challenging situations—transfer to many contexts.

### **Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) - Quantum Engineering at UNSW**

Quantum computing and quantum technology sound like science fiction, but they're rapidly becoming science fact, and [UNSW's Bachelor of Engineering \(Honours\) in Quantum Engineering](#) positions you at the absolute cutting edge of this technological revolution.

First, let's acknowledge that quantum engineering is genuinely difficult and not for everyone. The physics involved is counterintuitive and mathematically demanding. But if you're someone who's genuinely fascinated by how the universe works at its most fundamental level and wants to be part of transforming that understanding into practical technology, this could be the opportunity of a lifetime.

UNSW has invested over \$1 billion in quantum research facilities and ranks 25th globally for engineering and technology. This isn't a token program; it's a serious commitment to being a world leader in quantum technology. You'd be studying alongside researchers who are publishing in top journals and developing technology that could reshape computing, communications, and sensing.

But what do quantum engineers actually do? Quantum computers have the potential to solve certain problems that would take conventional computers millions of years to crack. They could revolutionise drug discovery by simulating molecular interactions, transform materials science by modelling complex materials, enhance artificial intelligence and machine learning, and break (or create unbreakable) encryption systems. Building these computers requires engineering at scales and precisions that push the absolute boundaries of what's technically possible.

You might work for one of the major tech companies (Google, IBM, Microsoft, Amazon) that are racing to build practical quantum computers. You could join one of the rapidly growing number of quantum technology startups working on specific applications or components. There are opportunities in defence and national security, where quantum technology has significant implications for communications security and sensing capabilities. Government research organisations and universities around the world are hiring quantum engineers for fundamental research that might lead to breakthrough discoveries.

Quantum technology isn't just about computing. Quantum sensors can measure magnetic fields, gravitational forces, time, and other quantities with unprecedented precision. These have applications in everything from medical imaging to mineral exploration to navigation systems that work where GPS doesn't. You might develop quantum sensors for detecting underground resources, create quantum-enhanced medical imaging systems, or work on quantum communication networks that are theoretically unhackable.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect is that this field is so new that many of the most important applications haven't been discovered yet. You could genuinely be part of defining what quantum engineering becomes, potentially working on technologies and applications that don't currently exist. It's the kind of opportunity that comes along maybe once in a generation—being part of a fundamental technological shift from the very beginning.

### **Bachelor of Science - Space and Planetary Science major at Curtin University**

Space isn't just for astronauts and astrophysicists anymore. As commercial space companies proliferate and space exploration accelerates, there's growing demand for people with expertise in planetary science, space technology, and related fields. [Curtin's Space and Planetary Science major](#) prepares you for careers in this expanding frontier.

Planetary geology alone is fascinating—studying the composition, structure, and geological history of other worlds. But it's not just about satisfying curiosity; this knowledge has practical applications. As missions to Mars, the Moon, and asteroids become more ambitious, we need people who understand planetary surfaces, subsurface resources, and geological hazards. You might work on mission planning, helping determine where rovers should explore or where future bases might be established. You could analyse data from planetary missions, interpreting

images and sensor readings to understand the geological history and composition of other worlds.

The resources sector is also looking skyward. Asteroids contain valuable minerals and metals, and several companies are seriously working toward asteroid mining. While we're still years away from commercial operations, the technical groundwork is being laid now, and they need geoscientists who understand both terrestrial mining and the unique challenges of operating in space. You might work on prospecting missions identifying promising asteroids, develop extraction technologies, or plan the logistics of space-based resource operations.

Navigation systems represent another career path. As space becomes more crowded with satellites and spacecraft, precise navigation and tracking become crucial. The technologies and techniques developed for space navigation also have terrestrial applications in areas like autonomous vehicles and precision agriculture. You might work on satellite navigation systems, develop tracking systems for space debris, or create navigation solutions for spacecraft operating around the Moon or Mars.

Mission design and operations is a field where space science meets engineering. Someone needs to plan trajectories, design mission objectives, coordinate instrument operations, and process the resulting data. Space agencies, commercial space companies, and research institutions all need people who can bridge the gap between the science objectives (what we want to learn) and the practical realities of actually doing it (what's physically and economically possible).

There are also growing opportunities in the commercial space sector. Companies are launching constellations of communications satellites, developing space tourism, planning lunar missions, and proposing Mars colonies. They need scientists and engineers who understand space environments, can solve practical problems, and can work at the interface between scientific knowledge and commercial operations.

Even if you don't work directly in space, the skills are highly transferable. Geoscience, remote sensing, data analysis, and complex systems thinking all have applications in environmental monitoring, resource exploration, defence, and other sectors. But let's be honest—the real appeal is the possibility of contributing to humanity's expansion beyond Earth, of helping answer fundamental questions about our place in the universe, and of working on projects that inspire wonder.

### **Bachelor of Computer Science (Honours) - Human-Centred Computing at the University of Adelaide**

Computer science programs are everywhere, but the [University of Adelaide's Human-Centred Computing specialisation](#) takes an unusual approach by focusing on how people actually interact with technology and how to design systems that genuinely serve human needs rather than forcing humans to adapt to poorly designed technology.

This specialisation recognises that the biggest challenges in computing often aren't technical—they're human. We have the technology to build incredibly sophisticated systems, but if people can't or won't use them effectively, that sophistication is wasted. Human-centred computing sits at the intersection of computer science, psychology, design, and social science, preparing you to build technology that actually works for real people in real situations.

Healthcare represents a massive opportunity for human-centred computing. Medical technology is becoming increasingly sophisticated, but it's often difficult for both healthcare professionals and patients to use effectively. You might work developing electronic health records that actually support clinical workflows rather than hindering them, create patient-facing apps that help people manage chronic conditions, or design clinical decision support systems that provide useful guidance without overwhelming doctors with alerts. The goal is always to enhance healthcare outcomes by designing technology around the needs and capabilities of the people who'll actually use it.

Education technology is another growing field where human-centred design is crucial. Online learning exploded during the pandemic, and it's not going away, but much educational technology is poorly designed and ineffective. You could work developing learning platforms that adapt to individual students' needs, create educational games that genuinely support learning objectives, or design virtual laboratory experiences that give students hands-on practice when physical access isn't possible. Understanding how people learn and designing technology to support rather than replace good teaching makes a genuine difference. User experience (UX) and interface design for social media, apps, and digital services is probably the most obvious career path. Every company with a digital presence needs people who can design interfaces that are intuitive, accessible, and effective. But human-centred computing goes deeper than making things look nice or easy to use. You're thinking about the psychological and social impacts of technology, considering accessibility for people with different abilities, understanding how cultural context affects technology use, and grappling with ethical questions about persuasive design, addiction, privacy, and digital wellbeing. Accessibility and assistive technology offer opportunities to do genuinely meaningful work. You might develop technology that helps people with disabilities access information and services, create communication tools for people with speech or language difficulties, or design interfaces that work for people with cognitive impairments. This requires deep understanding of human capabilities and limitations combined with technical skills to build solutions that actually work.

There are also emerging opportunities in areas like human-robot interaction (as robots become more common in homes, hospitals, and workplaces), voice interface design (as we interact more through conversation rather than keyboards and screens), and augmented/virtual reality experiences (which require completely rethinking how humans interact with digital information).

What makes this specialisation valuable is that it prepares you not just to build technology, but to build technology that genuinely serves human needs. That's a perspective every technology company should value, but many lack. As awareness grows about the negative impacts of poorly designed technology—from accessibility barriers to addictive design patterns to systems that embed bias—the demand for people who can design better technology will only increase.

### **What's next?**

If any of these unusual degrees have sparked your interest, the next step is researching them properly. Visit the university websites, look at detailed course structures, and try to speak with current students or recent graduates if possible. Consider attending open days or campus tours where you can see facilities and ask questions directly.

Remember that unusual doesn't mean risky if you choose strategically. These degrees have been developed because universities see genuine demand in growing industries. They're not experimental programs; they're responses to real workforce needs in emerging or rapidly evolving fields.

It's also worth thinking about what makes you interested in a particular unusual degree. Is it the subject matter itself, the career opportunities, the chance to be part of something new, or simply that it's different? Understanding your own motivations helps ensure you're choosing for the right reasons rather than just because something sounds cool or different.

If you're still figuring out the whole university application process, we've got a comprehensive guide on [how to apply to university](#) that walks through everything you need to know. And if you're feeling a bit lost about different qualification levels and what they all mean, check out our explanation of [bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees](#).

The beauty of exploring unusual degrees is that even if you don't end up pursuing them, the process of researching and considering different options helps you clarify what you actually want from your education and career. You might discover interests you didn't know you had,

learn about industries you'd never considered, or simply gain a better appreciation of just how many different paths are available. Whatever you choose, make sure it's something that genuinely excites you—because that enthusiasm will carry you through the challenges ahead.

## Do you need to change your preferences?

So you've applied to university – congratulations! Perhaps you've applied through an admissions centre, or maybe you applied directly to the university of your choice. Either way, did you know that once you've submitted your applications, they're not set in stone? Right up until the very last offer round, you can always change your preferences.

### Preferences - the basics

By the time you've submitted your applications, it's assumed that you understand 'preferences' and what it means for your application. But just in case you're still a bit uncertain, let's explain. *Preferences* is just a term for the courses you want to apply for, listed in the order you'd like to study them. They're also sometimes called choices or selections.

We recommend that you list your dream course/s first, some more realistic options next, and one safe option last. That way, you'll increase the chances of receiving at least one offer in the main offer rounds. Listing the maximum number of possible preferences on your applications is also a good strategy.

### Flexibility can be handy

If you're certain that you've applied to the best university and selected the best courses for you, that's great! All you need to do is move on and wait for an offer.

But if you decide you're not happy with your choices, or perhaps the order of your courses just isn't sitting right with you any more, guess what? There's good news – the whole applications system is designed to allow you to change your preferences.

### When can you change your preferences?

Most universities and admissions centres provide plenty of opportunities to change your preferences. After submitting your application and before the first offers are released, you can usually log in to your application and adjust your preferences.

Changing your preferences is usually free, but some institutions may charge a fee. In some cases, you might need to pay a fee if you change them more than two or three times.

If you're applying through an admissions centre, here are the change of preference cut-off dates for the main rounds of offers:

| Admission Centre      | Results date     | Offer date        | Change of preference cut-off |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <a href="#">UAC</a>   | 18 December 2025 | 23 December 2025  | 18 December 2025             |
| <a href="#">VTAC</a>  | 11 December 2024 | 23 December 2025  | 13 December 2024             |
| <a href="#">QTAC</a>  | 18 December 2025 | 23 December 2025  | 19 December 2025             |
| <a href="#">TISC</a>  | 19 December 2025 | 24 December 2025  | 20 December 2025             |
| <a href="#">SATAC</a> | 15 December 2025 | 15 January 2026   | 5 January 2026               |
| <a href="#">UTAS</a>  | 17 December 2025 | Mid December 2025 | Contact UTAS                 |

*Note:* If you've received an early offer for one or more of the courses on your preferences, and you'd still like more offers during other rounds, it's best to call the admission centre directly if you're unsure about what to do next.

Once the main round of offers are released, another window usually opens up. You'll have the chance to change your preferences again and possibly receive more offers, then choose which one to accept. Or, if you didn't get an offer in the first round, you can wait and see if you receive one in a subsequent round.

### **What if I'm applying directly to the university?**

If you're submitting your application direct to the university, you'll need to check with them if:

1. They allow you to change your course choices after your application has been submitted, and
2. Whether there is any cut-off dates you need to change your preferences by.

Some universities will let you swap your course choices right up until you receive an offer.

Others might ask you to complete a separate application if you change your mind about your course. We recommend you check the details on their website or contact them directly to confirm your options.

### **A note about quota and high-demand courses**

If all the places in a course have been filled after the first offer round, you won't be able to add it to your list in subsequent rounds.

If a course has an earlier closing date than the regular deadline, it's highly likely you won't be able to add it to your list once this date has passed, even if change of preference is still open.

If you want to apply to a course that is in high-demand or has caps on places, you should get your application sorted ASAP to ensure you don't miss out.

### **When might you decide to change your preferences?**

Consider adjusting your preferences if:

- Your results are better than you expect. If there's a competitive course you looked over because you didn't think it was a realistic option before, move it to the top of your list.
- Your results aren't as good as you had hoped for. To increase your chances of receiving an offer, put any courses you're eligible for at the top of your list.
- You have a change of heart about the best course or university for you.
- A new course has become available and you think it would be perfect.
- You discover a course you didn't know about when you applied.
- You find out that the prerequisites for a course you had on your list have changed.
- The course you applied for has been dropped by the university.
- You're looking back over your application and realise you didn't put your preferences in the right order.

### **Is changing your preferences really necessary?**

If you get higher results than you expected (yay you!), *don't* immediately rush off and change your preferences just because you can. If you're happy with your preferences, the best thing to do is stick with them – there's no such thing as 'wasting' good grades.

You might feel pressured into thinking you should change your list, particularly if your friends are talking about changing theirs and cut-off dates are coming up. Take a breath, spend some time researching any changes you're thinking of making, and make sure you're doing it for all the right reasons.

Finally, double check any prerequisites and eligibility requirements before you add or move a course. It would be a real shame to miss out on an offer because you didn't take a few minutes to read the entry criteria.

### **Don't panic**

If you miss the change of preference cut-offs for the first round, that's OK – you'll get the chance to change them again before the next offer round.

If all the rounds are over and you have an offer, but it's not for the course you really wanted, call up the university and find out what your options are. You might be able to start a different degree then transfer after completing a few subjects.

Most importantly, if you don't receive any offers at all, please remember that you still have lots of options. Most institutions have at least one alternative pathway, from bridging courses to experience-based entry options. You may be surprised to learn about the number of choices available to help you get into the university of your dreams.

### **Need more information?**

If you're still after more information, [we have heaps of other blogs on university applications and more to check out here](#).

## **Jobs & Careers**

### **Curious about a career in AI? It might not look like you expect**

Artificial intelligence is reshaping the job market in Australia, and the range of opportunities might surprise you. From customer-facing roles that help businesses adopt AI tools, to technical positions building the next generation of machine learning systems, to policy work ensuring AI is used safely and responsibly – there are genuine openings right now for people at different stages of their careers.

What's particularly interesting about this list is how varied the paths into AI work actually are. You don't necessarily need a computer science degree or years of coding experience to contribute to this field, though some roles do require strong technical backgrounds. The jobs below span sales and customer success, research and development, engineering, and even government policy.

We've pulled together nine current AI roles across Australia to give you a realistic picture of what's actually being hired for. Some are with well-known tech companies like OpenAI and Canva, others are with major Australian retailers and government agencies. They're based in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra, and Perth, with most offering hybrid work arrangements.

### **Quick summary of what we found:**

Only one out of these nine jobs explicitly requires a degree – the Woolworths Software Engineer (Machine Learning) role asks for a Bachelor's degree or higher in Computer Science or Engineering. For the ASIS intelligence roles, tertiary qualifications are "highly regarded" but not essential. The rest either don't mention degree requirements at all or focus primarily on experience and skills.

The most commonly sought skills across these roles include:

- strong communication (especially explaining technical concepts to non-technical people),
- stakeholder management,
- problem-solving,
- Python proficiency for technical roles, and
- genuine curiosity about AI.

For customer-facing positions, experience in SaaS sales or technical consulting matters more than formal qualifications. For technical roles, hands-on experience with machine learning frameworks, cloud platforms, and data pipelines is what employers are really looking for.

Experience expectations range widely. Some roles are open to people earlier in their careers (particularly the ASIS talent register, which explicitly welcomes early-career applicants), while most of the client-facing and technical roles are looking for around 5-7 years of relevant experience.

**Here's what's currently available:**

**AI, Machine Learning, Data Science & Analytics Talent Register – Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS)**

**Location:** Adelaide, SA and/or Canberra, ACT

**What you'd be doing:** This is a pool for intelligence roles that use data and AI to protect Australia's interests. Work can include building and using models, shaping tools, and helping analysts make sense of complex information. The bigger picture is national security, so the impact is direct and important. You'd be contributing to operations that genuinely matter for Australia's safety and strategic position, working with sensitive information and cutting-edge technology in a highly secure environment.

**What you'd need:** Australian citizenship and the ability to gain a high-level security clearance are essential. Tertiary qualifications are "highly regarded" but not required – they're looking for strong judgement, teamwork, and clear writing above all else. Experience expectations vary by level, from early-career positions right through to team lead roles, which makes this an accessible entry point for people interested in using AI for public service. The organisation values diverse backgrounds and perspectives, so if you're curious about applying data science and machine learning to real-world intelligence challenges, this could be worth exploring even if you don't tick every traditional box.

[View the ASIS job listing on SEEK](#)

**Account Director, Digital Natives – OpenAI**

**Location:** Sydney, NSW

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid (3 days in office per week)

**What you'd be doing:** You'd look after a portfolio of tech-savvy companies using OpenAI's products. Day to day, you'd meet with senior leaders, map out how AI could help their products or teams, and guide them from first trial to full rollout. You carry a revenue goal, so success looks like renewals and growth, not just a signed deal. Think relationship builder, translator, and coach in one role – you're not just selling software, you're helping companies fundamentally rethink how they work with the most advanced AI tools available. This means understanding both the technical possibilities and the business realities, then bridging that gap for customers who are often figuring out AI strategy as they go.

**What you'd need:** Roughly 7 years or more selling SaaS or platform products, confidence working with executives, and the ability to explain AI simply and honestly. No degree is listed as a requirement. What matters more is whether you can build genuine relationships, understand complex customer needs, think strategically about multi-year account plans, and stay calm when priorities shift rapidly. You'll need to be comfortable with ambiguity and excited by the challenge of working in a field that's evolving quickly.

[Apply for the Account Director role at OpenAI](#)

**Policy Officer (AI) – WA Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Office of Digital Government**

**Location:** West Perth, WA

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid (not specified); full-time or part-time available

**What you'd be doing:** Help WA Government agencies use AI safely and sensibly. You'd review projects for risk, write easy-to-follow guidance, and support a cross-government framework so

tools are fair, secure, and useful for the community. It's policy work with real-world impact, tied to the state's AI Policy and Assurance Framework. Rather than working in the abstract, you'd be helping shape how AI is actually deployed in public services – from health to transport to community services. This means balancing innovation with responsibility, and making sure the technology serves everyone equitably.

**What you'd need:** Solid policy skills including research, analysis, and clear writing. You'll need people skills to work across different government agencies, and genuine curiosity about AI. The ad explicitly states that AI experience isn't required – they're more interested in your ability to learn, think critically, and communicate complex ideas accessibly. Australian citizenship or permanent residency is needed for permanent public-sector roles. No degree requirement is listed, though experience in policy, research, or a related field would obviously be valuable.

[Search for the Policy Officer \(AI\) role on WA Government Jobs](#)

### **AI Deployment Manager – OpenAI**

**Location:** Sydney, NSW

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid (3 days in office per week)

**What you'd be doing:** Once a company buys ChatGPT Enterprise, you make it actually work for them. You'd plan the rollout, run training sessions, lead workshops or hackathons, and solve roadblocks so teams see real results. You measure success by live deployments and active users, not slides or reports. This is hands-on work that requires you to understand both the technology and organisational change management – you're as likely to be building prototypes as you are to be presenting to executives. The role sits at the intersection of technical expertise and people skills, and the best deployment managers are the ones who can switch between these modes effortlessly.

**What you'd need:** Around 6 years or more in customer-facing roles, proven delivery of AI or data projects, excellent communication with executives, and comfort steering change in complex organisations. No degree is listed. You'll need to be someone who can context-switch rapidly, manage multiple projects simultaneously, and prioritise ruthlessly when everything feels urgent. Experience with change management or organisational transformation is valuable, as is genuine passion for helping people work more effectively with AI tools.

[Apply for the AI Deployment Manager role at OpenAI](#)

### **Solutions Architect – OpenAI**

**Location:** Sydney, NSW

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid (3 days in office per week)

**What you'd be doing:** Be the technical guide for OpenAI's largest customers. You'd help them identify the best AI use cases for their business, shape how the systems fit together, and move pilots into production. A big part of the job is translating between business priorities and technical detail so projects actually launch and scale, rather than remaining interesting ideas that never ship. You'll work with senior customer stakeholders to build comprehensive roadmaps, intervene directly when needed by building hands-on prototypes, and forge relationships across the customer's organisation to ensure successful deployment.

**What you'd need:** Around 6 years or more in technical consulting or similar roles, strong stakeholder management skills, hands-on prototyping ability, and understanding of cloud and network basics. Programming experience in Python or JavaScript is expected. No degree is listed. What really matters is whether you can own problems end-to-end, communicate effectively with both technical and non-technical audiences, operate at high speed across multiple concurrent projects, and maintain a humble, collaborative attitude even when things get complicated.

[Apply for the Solutions Architect role at OpenAI](#)

### **Lead Research Scientist – Generative AI – Canva**

**Location:** Adelaide, SA (remote-friendly within AU/NZ)

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid with flexibility across campuses, co-working spaces, and remote work

**What you'd be doing:** Lead a small team pushing the next wave of Canva's AI features. You'd set research direction, run experiments, and make sure the best ideas become real tools used by millions. It's leadership plus hands-on guidance, and you'd represent Canva in the research community as well. This means balancing cutting-edge research with practical product delivery – you need to care as much about whether something ships and helps real users as you do about the technical elegance of the solution. You'll be working on problems that affect how millions of people create and communicate visually.

**What you'd need:** A track record leading research or applied-science teams, deep knowledge of modern generative models, and the ability to turn research into helpful product features that actually ship. No degree is listed as a requirement, though most people in this type of role do have advanced qualifications. What's more important is demonstrated ability to lead research that makes it into production, strong collaboration skills, and genuine excitement about making creative tools more accessible and powerful for everyday users.

[View the Lead Research Scientist role at Canva Careers](#)

### **Senior Product Manager – AI Research (CORE) – Canva**

**Location:** Melbourne, VIC

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid with choice of working from campuses, co-working spaces, home, or a mix

**What you'd be doing:** Turn cutting-edge AI research into features that ordinary people find useful. You'd help define problems, test ideas with prototypes, decide what ships first, and design fair ways to judge if the AI actually helps users. You sit between researchers, engineers, and business leaders and keep everyone focused on user value rather than just technical possibility. This is product management in a particularly challenging context – you need to understand enough about the technology to make informed trade-offs, but stay grounded in what real users need and will actually adopt.

**What you'd need:** About 5 years or more in product management with at least 2 years specifically on AI or machine learning products. Strong communication skills and comfort explaining how different AI approaches trade off against each other in terms of cost, speed, quality, and user experience. No degree is listed. You'll need to be someone who can navigate ambiguity, make decisions with incomplete information, and bring clarity to complex technical discussions whilst keeping the focus on user outcomes.

[View the Senior Product Manager role at Canva Careers](#)

### **Machine Learning / Data Engineer – 7-Eleven Australia**

**Location:** Richmond, Melbourne, VIC

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid with "work your way" flexibility

**What you'd be doing:** Keep a new machine-learning system healthy and useful for the business. You'd build and look after data pipelines, help models stay accurate over time, and monitor costs and performance. It's hands-on and practical work with clear links to store and customer outcomes – you're not working on theoretical problems, you're making sure the systems that help run one of Australia's largest convenience store chains actually work reliably day to day. This means everything from data quality checks to model retraining to infrastructure optimisation.

**What you'd need:** Strong Python and SQL skills, experience with Databricks and CI/CD pipelines, and solid problem-solving abilities. Certifications are a bonus but not required. No degree requirement is listed. What matters is whether you can build reliable data systems,

debug issues when they arise, work collaboratively with data scientists and other engineers, and think practically about trade-offs between perfect solutions and shipping something that works.

[View the Machine Learning / Data Engineer role on SEEK](#)

### **Software Engineer (Machine Learning) – Woolworths Group**

**Location:** Sydney, NSW

**Work arrangement:** Hybrid with Sydney office and work-from-home flexibility

**What you'd be doing:** Work with data scientists to build and run machine learning systems that power real retail decisions at scale. You'd help take ideas into production on Google Cloud Platform and keep them reliable over time. The work affects millions of customers, so quality and teamwork matter enormously. This could involve anything from recommendation systems to demand forecasting to pricing optimisation – all the systems that help Woolworths serve customers better whilst running the business more efficiently. You'll be part of a team that's modernising how one of Australia's biggest retailers uses data and AI.

**What you'd need:** A Bachelor's degree or higher in Computer Science or Engineering is required for this role, plus hands-on experience with Python, SQL, Linux, machine learning pipelines, Google Cloud Platform, Kubernetes, Docker, and MLOps tools. This is one of the few roles on this list with a formal degree requirement. You'll also need to be comfortable working in an agile environment, collaborating across teams, and maintaining systems that need to be reliable at serious scale.

[View the Software Engineer \(Machine Learning\) role on SEEK](#)

## **What you need to know about a career in rare earth minerals**

You've probably heard about Australia and the United States signing a massive \$8.5 billion deal on critical minerals and rare earths. If you're wondering what that means for your future career prospects, the short answer is: **potentially quite a lot**. This industry is set to grow significantly over the coming decades, and there are far more career pathways into it than you might think.

[Recent news coverage](#) highlighted just how essential these minerals have become – they're used in everything from AI and medical imaging to renewable energy and defence technology. But here's the thing: while everyone's talking about what these minerals do, fewer people are discussing the enormous range of careers this industry needs to function.

If you're trying to figure out what to study or which direction to take after school, understanding the opportunities in critical minerals could open doors you didn't even know existed.

### **What actually are critical minerals?**

Critical minerals are elements that are essential for modern technology and manufacturing but can be difficult to source reliably. The list includes rare earth elements like neodymium, dysprosium and gadolinium, as well as minerals like lithium, cobalt, and graphite. [CSIRO has an excellent explainer](#) if you want to dive deeper into the science.

Australia has enormous reserves of these minerals spread across the country. As former ambassador Kevin Rudd put it, "Australia more or less equals the periodic table" – geology has been remarkably kind to us. The challenge hasn't been finding these minerals; it's been developing the capacity to extract and process them here in Australia rather than shipping raw materials overseas.

### **Where are Australia's critical mineral deposits?**

Take a look at this map from [Geoscience Australia](#) showing rare earth element deposits across the country. You'll notice they're scattered quite widely – from Mount Weld in Western Australia to Dubbo in New South Wales, and numerous sites across the Northern Territory, Queensland, and South Australia.

This geographic spread is important to understand if you're considering a career in this sector. Unlike the iron ore industry, which is heavily concentrated in the Pilbara region of WA, critical minerals are found in diverse locations. Some are in very remote areas, whilst others are closer to regional centres. Right now, most of Australia's processing happens offshore in countries like China, but there's a growing push to bring more processing back to Australia. If that happens, you can expect job opportunities to develop near ports that are closest to mining sites – places like Port Hedland, Darwin, Gladstone, and potentially smaller regional ports. What does this mean for you? Be prepared for the possibility of fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) work, spending time living in remote but often beautiful parts of Australia, or – if you prefer city life – look for adjacent roles that support the industry from metropolitan areas.

### **The obvious pathway: Mining and geology**

Let's start with the careers most people think of first. If you're interested in getting your hands dirty (sometimes literally), there are numerous direct pathways into mining and geological work.

### **University pathways**

Mining engineering, geology, and geophysics degrees will give you the technical knowledge to work directly with mineral extraction and analysis. You'll learn about everything from identifying mineral deposits to designing safe and efficient mining operations. When you're looking at universities, seek out institutions with dedicated research centres focused on mining and critical minerals. For example, [Curtin University](#) and the [University of Adelaide](#) both have established centres for critical minerals research, which means you'll have access to cutting-edge knowledge and industry connections.

Metallurgy and materials science degrees are also highly relevant, particularly as Australia develops more processing capacity. These fields focus on how to extract useful elements from raw ore and how to work with the refined materials – skills that become crucial if we're going to process minerals onshore rather than simply exporting them.

### **Trade and vocational pathways**

Not keen on university? There are excellent trade pathways into this industry. Mining operations require qualified trades people including electricians, diesel mechanics, heavy machinery operators, and fitters. Many mining companies offer apprenticeships and traineeships, and once you're qualified, the work is well-paid and often includes FIFO arrangements that give you extended time off between work rotations.

Laboratory technician courses through TAFE can also lead into this sector. Processing minerals requires careful analysis and quality control, and skilled lab technicians are essential for this work. It's less physically demanding than mine site work and often based in processing facilities rather than at the mine itself.

### **Chemical engineering and processing**

Here's where things get particularly interesting, especially with Australia's ambition to do more processing domestically. Extracting rare earth elements from ore isn't simple – it requires sophisticated chemical processes to separate individual elements from the rock.

Chemical engineers design and optimise these processes. If you enjoy chemistry and problem-solving, this could be an excellent fit. You'd be working on challenges like how to extract gadolinium more efficiently, or how to minimise waste and environmental impact during processing. As Australia builds more processing facilities, demand for chemical engineers in this space is likely to grow substantially.

Process engineers and chemical plant operators are also needed to run these facilities once they're built. These roles exist at various qualification levels, from university degrees through to vocational qualifications.

### **Environmental science and management**

Mining has environmental impacts, and the industry needs qualified professionals to minimise harm and ensure operations meet regulatory requirements. This is where environmental scientists, ecologists, and environmental engineers come in.

Your work might involve conducting environmental impact assessments before mining begins, monitoring water quality and air pollution during operations, or rehabilitating land after mining ceases. You might also work on developing better practices that reduce the industry's environmental footprint – something that's particularly important given increasing scrutiny of mining's impact.

These roles often offer more flexibility in where you live. Whilst some environmental work happens on-site, much of the planning, analysis, and reporting can be done from offices in larger cities. This makes it a good option if you're interested in the industry but prefer not to work remotely.

### **Technology and automation**

Modern mining looks nothing like the pickaxe-and-pan operations of the gold rush era. Today's mines are increasingly automated, using everything from autonomous trucks and drilling systems to sophisticated sensors and data analysis.

If you're more interested in technology than rocks, consider pathways into robotics, automation engineering, software development, or data science. Mining companies need people who can program and maintain autonomous equipment, analyse vast amounts of operational data to optimise efficiency, and develop new technologies to make mining safer and more productive. These roles are particularly likely to be based in cities rather than remote locations, as much of the technology development and programming happens in urban centres even though the equipment operates in the field.

### **Research and development**

Universities and organisations like [CSIRO](#) conduct ongoing research into better ways to find, extract, and process critical minerals. If you're academically inclined and enjoy pushing the boundaries of what's possible, research could be your pathway.

Researchers might work on improving exploration techniques using satellite imagery and geophysics, developing more environmentally friendly extraction methods, or finding new applications for rare earth elements. This pathway typically requires completing an undergraduate degree followed by postgraduate study (Honours, Masters, or PhD), but it allows you to work on genuinely cutting-edge problems that could shape the industry's future.

### **Business, finance, and law**

Every mining project needs substantial investment, legal frameworks, and business acumen to succeed. This creates opportunities for people whose interests lie well outside science and engineering.

Mining lawyers specialise in everything from negotiating exploration rights and managing contracts to ensuring environmental compliance and handling disputes. Resources lawyers are consistently in demand, and the work can be both intellectually challenging and well-compensated. Many work for law firms in capital cities, advising mining companies remotely.

Financial analysts, accountants, and investment bankers are crucial for evaluating whether mining projects are economically viable, securing funding, and managing ongoing finances. The recent \$8.5 billion critical minerals deal, for instance, requires armies of financial professionals to ensure the money flows to the right projects and delivers returns.

Project managers coordinate the enormous complexity of getting a mine from concept to production. This role requires understanding technical aspects whilst also managing budgets,

timelines, stakeholders, and teams that might include hundreds or thousands of people. It's challenging work, but if you enjoy seeing big projects through from start to finish, it can be extremely rewarding.

### **International trade and policy**

The recent Australia-US critical minerals deal highlights something important: this isn't just a local industry, it's deeply embedded in international relations and geopolitics. Critical minerals have become strategically important, with countries competing to secure reliable supplies. This creates opportunities in international trade, diplomacy, and policy development. You might work for government departments advising on trade policy, for industry bodies representing Australia's interests internationally, or for companies navigating the complex web of international regulations and partnerships.

These roles typically require degrees in international relations, political science, economics, or law, often combined with genuine interest in and knowledge of the resources sector. Much of this work is based in Canberra or state capitals, making it accessible if you prefer city living.

### **Healthcare and safety**

Mining environments can be hazardous, and companies invest heavily in keeping workers safe and healthy. This creates demand for occupational health and safety professionals, mine site medics and nurses, and industrial hygienists who monitor air quality and exposure to hazardous materials.

Interestingly, rare earth elements are also used in medical technology – remember that gadolinium is essential for MRI scans. As demand for critical minerals grows and new medical applications are developed, there will be opportunities for healthcare professionals who understand both medicine and the materials science behind medical technology.

Occupational health roles might involve developing safety procedures, investigating accidents, training workers, or managing health monitoring programs. Many large mining companies employ full-time safety professionals, and there's also work available through consulting firms that service multiple companies.

### **Supply chain and logistics**

Getting minerals from remote mine sites to processing facilities, ports, and eventually to customers requires sophisticated logistics. Supply chain managers, transport coordinators, and logistics analysts ensure materials move efficiently whilst managing costs and meeting deadlines.

This work exists at various levels, from coordinating truck movements and rail schedules through to strategic planning of entire supply networks. If you enjoy solving practical problems and keeping complex systems running smoothly, logistics could be your niche.

Many logistics roles are based in regional centres or cities near ports rather than at remote mine sites, which can offer a good balance between working in the industry and maintaining a more conventional lifestyle.

### **Communications and community relations**

Mining projects affect local communities, and companies need to maintain good relationships with nearby residents, traditional owners, and other stakeholders. This is where communications professionals and community liaison officers come in.

Your work might involve consulting with communities about proposed projects, managing the company's public image, coordinating community investment programs, or helping negotiate agreements with Indigenous traditional owners. These roles require strong interpersonal skills and genuine respect for community concerns.

For those interested in Indigenous affairs specifically, many mining companies are working to improve employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians and to ensure traditional owners benefit from mining on their traditional lands. This creates roles in Indigenous engagement and partnership development.

### What should you do now?

If any of this sounds interesting, start exploring your options without feeling like you need to commit to a specific path immediately. Here are some practical next steps:

- Research **what's actually happening** in this space by following industry news and reading resources like those from [Geoscience Australia](#) and [CSIRO](#). Understanding the industry's direction will help you spot opportunities others might miss.
- Look at **university courses that align with your interests**, paying particular attention to institutions with strong research programs in mining and critical minerals. These universities often have better industry connections and more relevant practical experience opportunities.
- Consider what **kind of lifestyle** appeals to you. If you love the idea of working in remote, beautiful locations with FIFO arrangements that give you extended time off, direct mining roles might suit you perfectly. If you prefer consistent city living, look at the adjacent roles in law, finance, technology, or policy that support the industry from urban centres.
- Don't overlook **vocational pathways** if university doesn't appeal. Trades and technical qualifications can lead to excellent careers in this sector, often with less debt and faster entry into the workforce than university degrees.

Remember that early days in any boom industry create the most opportunity. Right now, critical minerals processing largely happens offshore, but that's changing. If Australia successfully develops more onshore processing capacity, entirely new employment hubs could emerge near ports and processing facilities. Getting in early – whether through study, apprenticeships, or entry-level roles – could position you well for a long and prosperous career.

The critical minerals industry represents a genuine opportunity for your generation. Australia has the resources, growing international demand is creating urgency, and the range of careers needed to make it all work is genuinely diverse. Whether you're drawn to science, business, technology, law, or something else entirely, there's likely a way to ride this wave if you're interested.

## Job Spotlights

### How to become a Cyber Security Analyst

Cyber security analysts protect organisations from cyber threats by monitoring networks, investigating security breaches, and implementing protective measures. They ensure that IT systems remain secure and vulnerabilities are identified and addressed before they can be exploited.

If you have strong analytical skills, enjoy solving complex problems, and are interested in combining tech knowledge with strategic thinking, a career as a cyber security analyst could be perfect for you.

#### What skills do I need as a cyber security analyst?

- Analytical and critical thinker
- Excellent attention to detail
- Great problem-solver
- Clear communicator
- Adaptable and quick to learn

- Fantastic teamworker
- Can work under pressure
- Ethical and trustworthy

#### **What does the job involve?**

- Monitoring networks for suspicious activity
- Conducting vulnerability assessments
- Investigating and responding to security incidents
- Installing and configuring security software
- Developing security policies and procedures
- Training staff on cyber security awareness
- Maintaining detailed logs of security events
- Staying current with emerging threats and technologies

#### **What industries do cyber security analysts typically work in?**

- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Public Administration and Safety
- Financial and Insurance Services

#### **What Career Cluster do cyber security analysts belong to?**

Because the core of their job involves protecting organisations and solving technical problems, most cyber security analysts belong to the [Guardian](#) and [Innovator](#) Clusters. There are also elements of the role that might suit [Informers](#), such as investigating threats, analysing data, and training others.

#### **What kind of lifestyle can I expect?**

Cyber security analysts typically work standard business hours, though the 24/7 nature of cyber threats means you may occasionally need to respond to security incidents at any time of the day or night.

Most cyber security analysts earn above-average salaries throughout their careers.

Cyber security analysts are employed across virtually every industry, from banks and hospitals to government agencies and tech companies. Because much of the work can be done from anywhere with a secure internet connection, hybrid or remote working arrangements are common.

#### **How to become a cyber security analyst**

To work as a cyber security analyst, you typically need a relevant tertiary qualification, such as a Bachelor's degree in Cyber Security, Computer Science, Information Technology, or a related field. Many universities now offer specialised cyber security degrees that cover essential topics like network security, cryptography, and ethical hacking.

Industry certifications are also highly valued and can significantly boost your employability.

Popular options include [CompTIA Security+](#), [Certified Ethical Hacker](#) (CEH), and [Certified Information Systems Security Professional](#) (CISSP).

#### **What can I do right now to work towards this career?**

If you're in high school and you'd like to find out if a career as a cyber security analyst is right for you, here are a few things you could do:

- Build your IT knowledge by learning about networking, operating systems, and different programming languages
- Look for work experience or internship opportunities with IT departments or security firms

- Participate in online cyber security challenges and capture-the-flag competitions

**Where can I find more information?**

- [International Information System Security Certification Consortium](#)
- [Australian Cyber Security Centre](#)
- [New Zealand National Cyber Security Centre](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre UK](#)
- [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#) (US)
- [Canadian Centre for Cyber Security](#)

**Similar careers to cyber security analyst**

- Software Engineer
- Network Administrator
- Risk Analyst
- [IT Support Officer](#)
- Musician
- [Systems Analyst](#)
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