Making decisions about your career can be guided by gaining a realistic understanding of the nature of work. Having trouble working out where to start? Here are some suggestions to help you explore your job and career options.

Research the employment market

- Which industries are relevant to my knowledge, skills and interests?
- What occupations exist today? (Remember some occupations have disappeared and new ones are becoming apparent)
- Which occupations are possible?
- What is the labour market outlook (local and global) for these industries and occupations?

See the My Facts section of myfuture for information about work and employment.

Develop an awareness of the requirements of employers

- What skills, experience and qualifications do employers require?
- Would further study improve your options?

Check job advertisements in newspapers or online. Try contacting employers, professional and industry associations and recruitment agencies to find out requirements.

Research appropriate organisations

- Who are the major employers in the industry?
- What are the latest developments in the industry?
- Which organisations are at the cutting edge of the industry?
- Who would you like to work for?
- What jobs are on offer?
- Start a list of employers that have the kinds of jobs you consider desirable.

Use Careers Online to research the employers who target UNSW students and graduates.

See the Getting Started section of the Graduate Careers Australia web site for information about researching potential employers. Again check job advertisements in newspapers or online. Try contacting professional and industry associations and talk to employers and faculty staff.

Gain experience

Not everyone lands their dream job fresh from university. You may have to start at the bottom and work your way up. Often you will have to gain experience in non degree related positions early in your university studies and then move into more degree related employment once you have developed skills and knowledge valued by employers. Remember, any employment experience is better than none. Future employers like to see you have a work ethic and if there is no evidence of employment on your resume, you may be culled. There are also benefits for you in that you gain an insight into what is involved in your chosen field and this is best done as early as possible.

If you have a passion to work in a particular industry:
• **Volunteer** a few hours a week and use this opportunity to show people how wonderful you are. Volunteer work can open many doors.
• Get experience. Try to get your foot in the door through a casual or part time position where you can see what you enjoy and what you are good at.
• Apply for vacation work or an industrial training placement.
• Talk to as many people in the industry as possible, they may have insider tips and know of opportunities you had not thought of. Try to speak to people working in the area you are interested in but remember to prepare yourself with intelligent questions. This is sometimes referred to as [Informational Interviewing](#).