

Sharpen your postgrad edge

“Researching and applying for jobs early is the key to success”

Most careers consultants say a postgraduate degree gives you an edge, but for many the way into that promised rewarding career can be daunting.

One of the best ways to move into a suitable career path is to be prepared. Be knowledgeable about your industry by researching demand in the current job market.

Swinburne’s manager of career and employment Emma O’Connell says current graduates are finding opportunities in accounting, engineering and IT industries. But in the next five years, career trends will shift into

new demand areas around health and community services, property and business services and the retail trade.

While not all industries show healthy career prospects, new research shows a postgraduate degree is a good investment in your future. The latest findings from Graduate Careers Australia shows 89.9 per cent of postgraduate respondents were likely to have been in full-time employment at the time of survey. The survey also indicated that the median annual salary for a new postgraduate rose to \$60,000 in 2006, an increase of almost \$2000 from 2005. Finding out about


employment prospects in your industry might also help you decide the best way to approach a post-graduate degree and the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (www.deewr.gov.au) has information about education and training opportunities.

O’Connell says that even when graduates do not get jobs, asking for feedback can improve your next application.

In preparing for the job hunt, she says a portfolio should encapsulate all the experience you have accumulated in the last five years. It is a good way of showing how a post-graduate degree has contributed to your professional and personal growth. Developing a portfolio can also match your talents with employers’ expectations, especially for

those employers who are unaware of the skills you might receive during post-graduate training.

Some graduates mistakenly believe a post-graduate degree will automatically open doors into a chosen career. Sometimes, a postgraduate degree is not enough. Swinburne’s manager of student projects and internships Diane Barker advises most postgraduate students to bolster their resumes with an internship.

In a competitive job market, Barker also says about 60 per cent of postgraduates apply for jobs while in their final years rather than final semester. This means researching and applying for jobs early is the key to success. 

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