

How work experience can help you get a job

There are a number of ways you can gain work experience during your studies and while you are seeking work.

Please note, some organisations in New Zealand do require volunteers and staff to go through Police checks - especially if the work involves children or young people. Don't be concerned if you are asked to go through a police check, everyone at that organisation will be going through the same checks.

Part-time / casual work

On a student visa, you can work up to 20 hours per week during study periods, and full time during study breaks.

International student experience

Sharmik Bavishi, a WITT Graduate, believes that all International Students should have jobs while they learn. His experience shows that having a job while you study provides more benefits than just reducing the costs of studying. He learned about working life in New Zealand while he studied. He was able to put things he learned in class into practice in real life. He also learned about how New Zealanders interact with each other at work.

Haruni Fernando, an IPU Graduate, gained lots of customer service experience working at Pak n Save and she says this really helped her when applying for her current job.



Employer comment

“We want to know what you would be like to work with. Your priority should be to get some work experience in New Zealand. We are not concerned about the type of work you did in your part time job - it doesn't have to relate to your studies. We want to know that you will show up, follow instructions, work hard and ask for help when you need it.”

Mike Doyle, General Manager,
Carac Group

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to build up your confidence and develop a range of skills. Employers are looking for students who engage in their local community and can demonstrate skills such as initiative, team work, cultural fit and communication skills. There are many ways to get involved in formal and informal volunteering – clubs and societies, sporting organisations, local school and community groups, or faith-based communities. Volunteer roles are non-paid.



Employer comment

“Take the opportunities to demonstrate your enthusiasm for your craft. Software developers can get involved in open source development, or volunteer to help with IT for community organisations... getting involved in these kinds of activities makes people stand out from the crowd.”

Mark Easton, Managing Director,
Nodero

International student comment

“For me it was important to study hard and get good grades, but I still wanted to volunteer so I could develop my network, share my kindness, show my respect to local multicultural people and develop my skills to integrate well into the local community.”

Cindy Nuong Nguyen, Massey Graduate

Work integrated learning (WIL)

Many education and training programs include opportunities for you to gain professional experience as part of the course. This might be offered as internships, real-world projects or simulated work experiences.

Find out more about WIL opportunities in your education or training programme through your course adviser or careers office – and take them if you can get them.

International student experience

“After my work experience at Novotel Auckland Airport, I felt confident enough to contact the manager at Novotel New Plymouth via LinkedIn asking for a job.”

Subhradip Chatterjee, PIHMS Graduate

Employer experience

Mike first noticed his international student employee when a group of Project Management students investigating supply chain issues came to visit the site. Before the end of the visit the student asked if he could carry out an investigation at Mike's company as part of the work experience he needed to graduate. They were impressed by his 'get up and go'.

Paid internships

Some companies may offer paid internships. These are generally targeted to students who are later on in their studies and are usually for fixed periods (e.g. three months over summer, or part-time over a semester).

Internships provide paid support and real world experience with a company and include supervision, structured training and staff development. In some cases, they may lead to a graduate position for stand out candidates.

Gaining work experience in any of these ways will help you to:

- ▼ Find potential referees
- ▼ Build your network in New Zealand
- ▼ Show you have a New Zealand employment history
- ▼ Show that you are reliable, can manage your time, and are ready to work
- ▼ Better understand New Zealand workplace practices
- ▼ Develop your interpersonal skills (e.g. speaking and listening, team work, customer service)
- ▼ Develop your English language and interpersonal skills by interacting with a diverse range of people, ages and ethnicities
- ▼ Apply your theoretical knowledge to professional tasks
- ▼ Build skills and experience in your chosen field
- ▼ Try before you buy - road test a role or career

Take opportunities to network with employers

Talking to employers is another way you can learn about work in New Zealand.

You can take the opportunity to go to networking functions such as Business after 5's in your area.

To find out more about what is going on in your area:

- ▼ Manawatu - www.ceda.nz
- ▼ Taranaki - www.venture.taranaki.info
- ▼ Whanganui - www.whanganuiandpartners.nz

You can also set up meetings with people from organisations or industries that you are interested in. Consider asking them to meet you for a coffee so you can find out more about their business needs and their industry. You need to pay for the coffee though!

Use these opportunities to develop your own understanding. Don't make the mistake of directly asking for a job in these kinds of conversations. Focus on getting information you need to help you with your job hunt, and making a good impression.