Give yourself the best possible options when thinking about which job or career you wish to focus on, by researching thoroughly and creating a plan. Research is about investigating, both broad and specific information, from a diverse range of sources. It is about collecting data and analysing and evaluating it, in accordance with your individual needs. Research and deeper exploration will help you during the following stages of your own career management:

• Initial preparation and self-awareness
• Identifying your suitability for a position and industry
• Targeting industries
• Applying for a position
• Negotiating and accepting a job.

Initial preparation

Begin your research process with self-awareness and evaluation (see our SCU fact sheet on self-assessment). You will need to be able to identify key areas such your interests, skills, values, personality and fit. You may also like to have an awareness of your own approach to research. At one end of the scale, there are the people who prefer to ‘wing it’ acting immediately, with little or no research carried out. While at the other end of the spectrum, there are those in danger of getting lost in lengthy and irrelevant research, resulting in inaction or ‘analysis paralysis’.

Targeting industries

Once you have completed your self-assessment, it will be easier to identify industries you think and feel may suit you. They may be areas in which you have had direct experience, or possibly industries you would like to learn more about. Create a list of likely industries that fall into these two categories. Some examples of industries are: law, psychology, health, government, education, and tourism and hospitality.

Expand your industries by creating a database of your opportunities. Add as many organisations, associations, and settings to your file as possible. Be broad, as well as specific. For example, if psychology is your area, list general areas where psychologists work, plus specific settings. Think laterally. The list will grow as your research will be ongoing. You may wish to refer to www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au or www.myfuture.edu.au for ideas.

For example: psychology

General: Education – Schools: public and independent, secondary and primary, universities, TAFE.
Specific: St John’s, Lismore High, Surfers Paradise State School, St Mary’s, Summer Heights High, etc.
General: Government – local, state, federal, health, social/disability services, youth services, corrective services, the armed forces.
Specific: Youth Connections, Lismore Base Hospital, Headspace, etc.

Now you have identified interesting industries and organisations you will need to collect relevant information. Look at industry, organisation and position-specific information. Do not limit yourself to the internet. Talk to people in the industry and refer to our SCU fact sheets on information interviews and networking. Also see the Career FAQs industry booklets available for download from the SCU Career Development Program on MySCU.

Where to look

Organisation websites and blogs, MyFuture website, job blogs, professional associations, CareerHub, LinkedIn, SCU Alumni, newspapers, libraries, journals, books, reports and studies, seminars and conferences, company annual reports, Career FAQs booklets.
What to look for

Industry information
- Is this a growth industry?
- What are the demographics of this industry?
- Have there been any recent changes in the industry?
- What have been the historical developments in the industry?

Organisation information
- How old is the organisation? What are the origins and history of the organisation?
- Who founded it and how?
- How large is the organisation? Is it growing? Do you know anyone in your network who works there?
  Check on LinkedIn.
- What is their product or service delivery? Have there been shifts or changes in these recently?
- Who are its clientele? Who are its major competitors?
- What sort of reputation does it have in the industry?
- Where is the organisation based? Does it have other branches?
- Does the organisation employ a diverse range of employees?
- Are women employed in senior positions?
- What direction is the organisation heading in?
- How does the company deal with conflict resolution?
- Have there been any redundancies lately?
- What is the financial health of the organisation like?
- What is the general feel or culture of the organisation?
- Does it employ graduates?
- Does it provide on-going training or incentives?
- What is the organisation’s values?

Job-specific information
Refer to our SCU fact sheet on information interviews.

How to use the research
- Your research can be used to help you make informed decisions about what course of study, career path or job may be fulfilling for you.
- Your knowledge of the organisation can be used to specifically tailor your job application (cover letter, resume and selection criteria), by identifying how your own skills, knowledge and qualities would fit the company.
- At an interview you can highlight the research you’ve done by commenting on positive aspects of the organisation that inspired you and in which you’d like to be involved; or, you can ask considered questions in response to information you found. Do not use your knowledge to criticise the organisation in an interview. Refer to our SCU fact sheet on preparing for an interview.

Checklist – research
- I have undergone a process of self-assessment and exploring diverse options.
- I have targeted several industries in which I am interested.
- I have identified organisations I may like to work for.
- I have collected data on those industries and organisations.
- I have analysed and evaluated how this information impacts on my career pathway.
- I have applied my research to inform my job prospects.
- I have referred to other SCU fact sheets for complementary information.

Where to find more help
- SCU Career Development Program on MySCU – learn.scu.edu.au
- Visit careerhub.scu.edu.au for job vacancies, events and resources
- Email for a careers consultation: careers@scu.edu.au
- For further resources and fact sheets go to scu.edu.au/careers

Career Development Service
Southern Cross University

CRICOS Provider: 01241G