

Goodbye waking up at noon and 4 months of summer holidays. Hello the real world!

by Hayley Eames

My final year of university... what a daunting thought! The time had come for me to part with my security blanket and all the things I love so much about being a uni student. Goodbye waking up at noon and coming home at 3:00pm. Goodbye 4 months of summer holidays. Goodbye skipping afternoon classes if I need some retail therapy. Hello working 9:00am – 5:00pm as a bare minimum, 5 days a week as a bare minimum, 50 weeks of the year. Hello having to care about what clothes I put on in the morning. Hello responsibility, deadlines and targets. Hello the real world!

Throughout my degree I had heard lecturers and tutors refer to this thing called the 'real world', but wrapped up tight and snug in my comfy blanket, I never really conceived having to venture out into it. Then, one sunny summer day as I was relaxing on the beach, I had a revelation. This was technically my last opportunity to relish in the luxury of uni holidays. This time next year, I will be an employee!

As much of a shock it was to realise that the inevitability of work was fast approaching, in hindsight, I was getting a bit ahead of myself. Before I could become a member of the workforce, some serious decision making and proactive action needed to take place.

Compared to some of my friends, I was relatively conscientious in the respect that I realised at the *beginning* of my final year that some sort of preparation was needed in order to secure a job when I graduate. However, I didn't exactly know what this preparation was going to involve. Unsure of where to start, I resorted back to the trusty information super highway and surfed around the Monash website. Luckily for me, I decided to look on the Monash University Careers and Employment page and happened to stumble upon a notice promoting an Internship Program for final year students. I can't stress to you enough that applying for the Careers and Employment Internship Program was honestly the best decision I could have made.

I didn't know what I wanted to do after I finished uni. I didn't know what options I had. I didn't know how to go about getting a grad job. I didn't know which employers would hire me. I didn't know what employers were looking for. I didn't know anything about the graduate recruitment process. And I definitely didn't know what to expect. I think it's safe to say that I was pretty clueless. However, in undertaking the Internship, all of these questions were answered and more.

Firstly, the Internship helped raise my general level of awareness and understanding about graduate recruitment. Within the first few weeks I was assisting at the Monash University Careers and Employment Graduate Careers

Fair. This was an awesome opportunity to meet with potential employers and find out what they have to offer me, whilst leveraging the fact that I'm completing an Internship, thus selling myself to them.

Throughout the following weeks, I was doing tasks such as updating company databases both on the web and on hard copies in the office, finding grad jobs advertised in the newspaper and saving these to file, as well as promoting the Careers and Employment services around campus. Every time I went into the office, I found out more and more valuable information about my future.

I learnt when the applications for graduate positions open and more importantly close. I learnt about the various stages of the recruitment process. I learnt about what to expect in all the different psychometric tests. And I learnt about how to conduct myself in interviews. But what does this really equate to?

I utilised all of the information and skills I gained over the period of my internship and as a result, I have already secured myself a job with a reputable multi-national firm when I graduate... if I choose to take it. I also have three other applications that are still in the final rounds of completion.

The moral to the story... the Internship opens doors. It is not only an extremely valuable credential to have on your resumé, it even motivated me to get a second job in an industry related to my studies so as to improve my position in the job market. The firms that hire graduates have thousands and thousands of applicants (one of mine had 10,000) and you need to be able to stand out from the masses!

Sure it's been tough working two jobs, undertaking the Internship, finishing off my degree and being involved in multiple arduous and ongoing recruitment processes, but it's definitely worth it. I don't need to worry about next year because I now have options. Furthermore, if you manage your time effectively, you might even find that it's fun. This year I had the chance to work with a great group of people who are just like me and therefore, we've been able to share our experiences and rebound ideas off one another.

Even if you don't complete the Internship, make sure that you make the most of Careers and Employment. That's what it is there for! Your final year of uni is the most important of them all. You don't want all those sleepless nights finishing assignments and cramming for exams to go to waste.