



## Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment

### School of Life and Environmental Sciences

#### Tips for Contacting Host Organisations

The work experience component of your Professional Practice unit will benefit your resume and employability as a graduate. Please try to focus on an area that will target both your skills and interests, and potentially provide employment opportunities at a later stage.

##### Identifying host organisations:

1. Identify what field in the industry you would like to undertake your work experience. Do some research to locate businesses and organisations that cater to your preferences via web, newspapers, Deakin Jobshop and canvass your local area.

If you are unsure of your career ambitions, please feel free to discuss potential directions with your course adviser or refer to information on the Student Life website: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/studentlife/careers/> or check the list of organisations on the Professional Practice website:

2. Compile a list; you may not be lucky enough to succeed with your first choice. Do some more research into your list of companies i.e. research other areas within the organisation that you might want to work with.
3. Establish a rough timetable of availability for yourself using the trimester breaks and during your trimester studies. If a company is prepared to accept you, you need to be flexible and be able to cater to their schedule.

##### Contacting host organisations:

Once you have your list of organisations, it is now time to work out who to contact. You may have to contact the organisation by phone or email. If they have a web site, locate the contact details for the HR department or you may have to use the general enquiries contact.

When liaising with organisations please remember to be polite and courteous at all times, even if it is not reciprocated. This displays your maturity and professionalism. Also remember you are representing not only yourself and Deakin University, but other Deakin students, current and future. If you are rude to an organisation, they may choose not only to not accept you now, but other Deakin students in the future.

These organisations are contacted repeatedly by many other students, universities, TAFE colleges and high schools for similar work experience positions. Conducting yourself in a polite and professional manner and acting patiently will display why they should give you a chance.

##### Phone:

Prepare your spiel for when you contact them. Perhaps something similar to:

'Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I'm a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student studying at Deakin University and I would like to speak to somebody regarding the possibility of a professional placement.'

Whatever it is you plan to say, be prepared to say it many times.

It is here you may need to say your spiel a few times until you are directed to the right person. The practice will come in handy, and you'll find the more you say it, the more confident and better you will deliver it.

#### **Email:**

If you contact the organisation by email, then indicate in your email:

- who you are;
- your reason for contacting the organisation;
- your year of study and subjects;
- having done some research on the organisation, explain why you would like to do your work placement with them.

The organisational response can go three ways; yes, no or maybe.

No, sorry we are not interested. If this is the response you get, please thank whoever you are liaising with for their time. Then continue on with your list.

Maybe / I am unsure / I will get back to you. If this is the response you get, that is good. It is not a flat out refusal. Ensure you leave your details and confirm their details so you can get back to them if they do not get back to you. You may be asked to provide further information, including letter, resume and academic transcript, for them to consider your request.

Regarding re-contacting an organisation, leave a one to two week gap, or look for another way to contact them i.e. if you had left a voice message, follow up with an email (if you have access to email addresses, even the general enquiry one will suffice).

If you did contact a person directly and have not heard back, call reception or their general enquiries line to confirm you are waiting on the correct person. You may be waiting to hear back from the wrong person and not know. People will not always return your call if the message does not apply to them.

Yes. If this is the response you get, great! Confirm what you are to do next. You may have to follow up with another phone call or email, and/or provide further information, including letter, resume and academic transcript.

For assistance on resume and cover letter writing, please refer to the Careers and Employment section of the Student Life web page: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/services/careers/index.php>

At any stage if the potential host wants further information on the unit or insurance details, please email Heather Andrews ([heather.andrews@deakin.edu.au](mailto:heather.andrews@deakin.edu.au)) with their contact details and Heather will liaise with them.

Please remember at any stage during this process for assistance contact Heather Andrews by phone on 03 9244 6800 or email: [heather.andrews@deakin.edu.au](mailto:heather.andrews@deakin.edu.au)