

Working In Australia

[00:00:12] Sid

G'day, welcome to Western Sydney University. I'm Sid Sharma and I've got things every student should know. Your time at Western might not just be studying. You may be looking to find a job in your field of interest as well. If that sounds like you, then keep listening. You're going to learn the stuff you need to do before getting a job, as well as some tips to help your job search in Sydney. You'll hear from Jackie from the career service and Pallavi, who recently completed her Master's at Western. Let's kick it off, here are five things you need to know about landing a job.

[00:00:45] Sid

Number one. The essentials. Jackie, what are some of the basics that you need for getting a job?

[00:00:51] Jackie

So I guess the first thing you need is to get your tax file number sorted and get yourself a bank account. So of course, nobody gets paid in cash, I don't think and if you are getting paid in cash, it's probably something that you need to question, but you need a bank account for that money to be transferred into

[00:01:11] Sid

Mmm, and does that need to be an Australian bank account?

[00:01:13] Jackie

It probably does, because otherwise you get hit with a lot of transaction fees. I know I've worked overseas and if your bank account isn't a local one, it creates a lot of problems.

[00:01:22] Sid

It just makes it easier.

[00:01:24] Jackie

Yeah, you need to have an ATM that you can, you go to an ATM easily and all that sort of stuff.

[00:01:27] Sid

Absolutely, and what about the tax file number?

[00:01:31] Jackie

You won't be able to get paid until you have a tax file number, because your employer should be taking out an appropriate amount of tax.

[00:01:39] Sid

And so some other things as well alongside the bank account and the tax file number, to kind of have sorted when you're looking for a job and I think one of them is professional contact details, like having a phone number and an email.

[00:01:51] Jackie

And, and having a way to share that so for instance, obviously a resume is helpful because you can send people all of those details in the one form. LinkedIn is becoming very popular, so, you know, put your email and your phone number, you don't - not many people need to know your personal accommodation or living address these days, but certainly, you know, you need those other things sorted. I actually recommend to students to have like a business card, but we would probably call it a contact card, where you've just got your details, you know your phone number, your name, the sort of jobs that you can do or the skills that you have so that if you meet somebody casually, you can give them your card so that if they find something they can get in contact with you.

[00:02:33] Sid

Yeah, everything is an opportunity there.

[00:02:34] Jackie

Yeah, that's right.

[00:02:36] Sod

And I mean I know from personal experience, I've had some pretty embarrassing email addresses before, but when I decided that I needed to get a job, I made one that sounded really, that that looked professional, you know, like instead of being I don't know like rainbow hat-wearing lizard at hotmail.com.

[00:02:53] Jackie

Yeah.

[00:02:53] Sid

It was, it was my name, you know something that I would be proud of to give to someone.

[00:02:58] Jackie

That's going to put you in that, that mindset where you're starting to feel professional as well.

[00:03:02] Sid

Yeah, definitely.

[00:03:03] Jackie

It's a bit like, you know wearing the right outfit to an interview, you know, you feel like you're in the right place.

[00:03:07] Sid

And the final thing is, superannuation. When you start working, your employer's probably going to pay you super, what is that?

[00:03:15] Jackie

So you pay a part of it and the employer will pay part of it and it set aside for you when you become a pensioner, because you've been saving towards your retirement. Now, of course, that's not the case if you are, if you're planning to go overseas and when you leave, you can take that money with you, but the key takeaway is it's simple, your employer will set it up for you, but once you have a particular fund that they - if they have chosen a particular fund - probably best to just stick with that fund, because next time you go to a different job, they might ask you what fund do you use. You just give them the same name, then everything goes into the one place.

[00:03:58] Sid

As opposed to having two or three based on how many jobs you've had right?

[00:04:01] Jackie

That's right, and the problem with that, I think Pallavi you have an example.

[00:04:05]

Yes. So after coming to Australia, I get my superannuation account set up with one of the Australian banks and I did one job and my super funds came to that account, but when I started in the University, like working at Western Sydney University, a super account was set for me by the University and after five, six months of working, I realised that I have two super accounts and I am being taxed or I'm being charged for the administrative fees twice. So rather than paying the fees twice, I rolled over my money from one super account to another in which like my pay and superannuation funds were coming.

So I think it's a good advice to have or stick to one super account rather than having multiple and paying tax double time.

[00:04:49] Sid

Yeah, it's like you wouldn't have all your furniture in two houses right and pay two lots of rent. So why should you have two supers?!

[00:04:55] Pallavi

You're right!

[00:04:56] Sid

And look, if that seems complicated believe me, it's not. All you need to do is head over to moneysmart.gov.au, and they've got a whole host of resources on superannuation and how it relates to you.

Number two. Know your limits. Jackie, how many hours exactly can an international student work while they're here in Australia?

[00:05:21] Jackie

Nowadays, you can work 40 hours a fortnight during your study semester. It used to be that you could only work 20 hours per week, but now you can spread it out over two weeks and you might work 30 hours in the first week and 10 hours in the second week, but you have a limit of 40 hours per fortnight and then in the holiday period you can work full-time 40 hours. It's not limited, as long as it's during the holiday period.

[00:05:48] Sid

So that's really good, because it gives people the flexibility to you know, if you're working in a casual job or a part time, you can kind of move your hours around based on if you've got exams or you know, if you've got to study one week that kind of thing.

[00:06:00] Jackie

Yeah.

[00:06:01] Pallavi

So I just want to add on the work, it differs on the basis of the course which a student is studying. So if a student is doing PhD, so they can work more hours rather than a person doing Masters or Bachelors by coursework. Yes, the limit is 40 hours per fortnight, but it depends upon course. It's better that student do check the Visa conditions.

[00:06:26] Sid

Number three. Check out the Career Service. As a student at Western, you have access to the Career Service. Jackie, you're from the Career Service, what is it all about?

[00:06:36] Jackie

Our Career Service is mainly a way that we can help students to find jobs and to prepare for jobs and to prepare for work after graduation. So it's about finding part-time jobs and student work but also about what are the things that I need to do so that I can prepare myself for jobs after I graduate and jobs in my degree. We run workshops, we have a hotline that you can call Monday to Friday. We have so many resources online and that's why the best place to start is with the hotline. And from there, if you need to have a face-to-face appointment, well, then we can make one for you.

[00:07:16] Sid

So tell me a little bit more about the hotline. Is it 24 hours a day?

[00:07:21] Jackie

So the hotline runs from ten until one each day, and it is serviced by our Senior Career Consultants, so they can talk about anything as simple as you know, should I be working in this job? What should I be paid? Through to "I don't know why I'm doing this degree". And if it's something that's a little bit more complex, we might suggest that they come in and meet somebody face to face and we can identify a campus that's close to those students.

[00:07:47] Sid

What are some of the other things that the Career Service does? You run workshops and events?

[00:07:52] Jackie

Every month we run - or every week - we run workshops on most campuses and that's about how to find work, how to write a resume, how [00:08:00] to write selection criteria and how to go about interviews, and then we have other major events like career expos and you can find them on our website just under the events section.

[00:08:12] Sid

You mentioned that the career service can also help you in terms of getting a job there and then. Does it post up opportunities online?

[00:08:20] Jackie

Students jump on our job board, which is a bit like Seek, only this is just for University students - for our University students, and it's for, its lots and lots of student jobs. So last year there was about two and a half thousand part-time jobs for students.

[00:08:35] Sid

Wow!

[00:08:36] Jackie

So they expect that they're going to students who don't have very much experience. So it's a good place to start, but we also have graduate jobs and vacation work, volunteer jobs, you know, it's our most popular service.

[00:08:50] Sid

So the Careers Service job board online seems like a really great way to start off looking for a job if you know, you don't know what to do and Pallavi, I know you basically found your job through the online job board, right?

[00:09:03] Pallavi

Yes you're right, the current job I'm working and a previous one I have found through Jobs On Campus portal of Western Sydney University Careers website. Also, look for jobs on campus, it do not only advertise jobs available on campus at Western Sydney University, it also advertised jobs off campus, which the students who are about to graduate or who have recently graduated, they can also apply through that and that's really a good one.

[00:09:30] Jackie

Those Jobs On Campus jobs are very popular and one of the reasons they're very popular is because they have a high rate of pay.

[00:09:38] Pallavi

Yes. They've paid good.

[00:09:40] Jackie

So that's like \$35 an hour plus, and that's not very common in the workplace for students usually.

[00:09:48] Sid

It's almost double!

[00:09:49] Jackie

Yeah, so it's very popular, but it also means that it's very competitive and so those jobs are quite hard to get, and a lot of people will apply but the key is attend [00:10:00] those workshops and find out how to write selection criteria, because that's really the application questions are basically selection criteria.

[00:10:15] Sid

Number four. Jobs for you. Now I want to talk about all the opportunities that are available to international students. Jackie, tell me a little bit about what kind of jobs are available.

[00:10:27] Jackie

The key thing about finding the appropriate job for you is preparation and having a good understanding about how to find a job. It's about convincing somebody to employ you via the way you write your application and the way you speak at an interview. So my suggestion is that usually when international students first start in their first semester, they really should be looking at joining some clubs, becoming a volunteer somewhere, doing something that might not be paid initially.

[00:11:04] Sid

I know that a lot of uni students start out working in places like retail or in hospitality. What are some of the options there?

[00:11:11] Jackie

Working as a waiter or waitress, working as a labourer, and some of it will depend on the skills that you have beforehand. So Pallavi had skills already and so she was able to use those in a degree related job, but for many people you will have to be doing stuff that's not degree related at all - tutoring, doing babysitting, cleaning gardens, whatever you can to get some sort of experience and start to build your networks of people.

[00:11:39] Sid

See when I started University, I - my first job was working in retail and I'd never worked before, that was actually my first job and I was really worried that I didn't have any experience and so I wouldn't be able to work there but actually, sometimes people yeah people give you a go and you do learn so many of those experiences of how to talk to people, of how to manage money and you know, how to manage [00:12:00] your time and you learn them on the job.

[00:12:02] Jackie

That's why, that's why employers want people with experience, because they want to know that you've already worked out how to turn up for work on time, you know, and how to dress properly and all of those things are you know essential and that's why they want experience.

[00:12:14] Sid

So, what are some of the ways of getting experience if you're trying to apply for a job that requires it?

[00:12:20] Jackie

So you really have to start with those jobs that don't require experience! That's how you've got to start because you're competing against other people that have experience. So you've got to look for those jobs that you know, they say no skill required or no previous experience required and then you have to be extremely positive and have a real can-do attitude. So the first thing they ask for is being able to communicate well with other people, get on with other people and the second thing usually is they want to work out that you know, yes, you are prepared to do just about anything and you can prove that by the fact that you've done some volunteer work or maybe the fact that you might be a swimmer and so for, you know, six years of your high school life, you got up at five o'clock every morning to go swimming. Proving that you can do things and that you are disciplined, you know, those sorts of things are what an employer is looking for initially. And once you've got some experience and some skills, well, then the world opens up for you.

[00:13:15] Pallavi

I want to add something, it's one word, which I have learned after coming to Australia and it's called networking. If you want to get a job, if you want to learn something new you need to know how to network, or you need to grow your network. University, especially the Careers Department offers mentoring program, for example, Women in Science and Engineering a program called WISE.

[00:13:39] Jackie

We actually have expanded that networking program. And so all students can put their profile on to something called Vine Up and they can look for a mentor and find a mentor that way. So again, it's going on to our Careers website and that's a really good way to start expanding and finding some jobs.

[00:14:05] Sid

Number 5. Help is available. So what happens if you do find yourself in a dodgy job?

[00:14:11] Jackie

Working in Australia, you have a lot of protections and you have a lot of opportunity to find ways to make sure that you're not being cheated and I guess we would refer you to the fairwork.gov.au website, where you can find out about penalty rates and salary rates and what's a reasonable rate of pay. You should have the right to ask for a pay slip to show what it is that you're being paid, your hourly rate and how much tax you have paid. Now a lot of smaller companies - and I would have to say small restaurants - and often places where you work with your family, these things don't always happen so easily and it's, if it's a friend or family member it's hard to ask for those things. If you are not paying tax, or if the company is not paying tax for you, you won't be covered for insurance and you will not be covered for naturally for any sick leave or any holiday pay or any of that sort of stuff. But the big problem is you won't be covered for insurance, because they are not paying what's called Workers Compensation Insurance. And if they're not paying that, if you have an accident, who's going to look after you, you know.

[00:15:21] Sid

See, that, that is really interesting because I know in a lot of places overseas cash in hand jobs are being paid cash for your work is actually a legitimate form of employment. But yeah, as you said you can make sure that your getting things like insurance, that you're getting things like super which all in the long-term benefit you right?

[00:15:36] Jackie

That's right. Another way that you might identify that something is a bit dodgy - there's a good Australian slang word for you - is that you probably, if you are getting paid less than \$15 an hour, you are definitely being exploited. I think a reasonable rate for students of age 18 or over would be at least \$15 to \$20 an hour. And if people are suggesting that they should pay you less than that because they're doing you a favour, actually they're not doing you a favour and I guess the problem is, I often talk to students who say "well but how do I get a start? How do I get some experience? If you know nobody wants to employ me". So therefore they feel like they have to work for free in order to get some experience. In order to prove that you have experience, you need to be able to use that person as a referee and you need to be able to put that on your resume. Otherwise, you still can't prove that you've had experience. So, you know, I really recommend that you might say something like "okay look I'll work for you know a week or two weeks just to prove myself, but after that, you know we really do need to negotiate something else because otherwise I need to look somewhere else" and maybe you start looking for somewhere else at the same time.

[00:16:54] Pallavi

I have heard from a few people that they do join some restaurants or some other jobs and the employer ask that you have to do six day or five day training and I'll see how do you work and they don't get paid for that. So if you're working, even if it's training you should get paid, so I think students, especially international students must be aware that every work you do in Australia must be paid.

[00:17:18] Jackie

If you get caught and you are in that situation, as soon as you can give us a call on our helpline, the careers helpline 4736 0522 and we can help you to you know, identify whether you know, you need to go and talk to somebody.

[00:17:40] Sid

Thanks for listening. You'll find links to everything you heard today at westernsydney.edu.au/careers. I'm Sid Sharma. See you next time.