

Vocation project interview questions — support document

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Interview questions for graduates

About you

What is your age?

- Under 25 years
- 25–29 years
- 30–34 years
- 35–39 years
- 40 years and over

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male

All graduates: About your study and work up to now

- G1 What year level did you get to at school, and when did you leave school?
- G2 Have you undertaken any other qualifications since leaving school, and if so, what were they?
- G3 Have you tried to combine paid work and study in your current qualification or in any qualification that you have undertaken? If so, could you please tell us about it?
- G4 Why did you do your most recent qualification?
- G5 Tell us a little about how you came to work in your current position – what kinds of jobs and experiences got you here?

Graduates from institution-based programs

- G6 What aspects of your most recent course were helpful in preparing you for work? What was less helpful? What could be improved?
- G7 What kind of job did you expect you would get at the end of your studies? Is your current job the job you expected you would be working in when you were doing your studies? If it is, how did your studies help you to get this job? If it wasn't, why do you think this was the case?
- G8 Did you do any formal work experience as part of this course? If you did, how was the work placement found for you?
- G9 If you did a work placement, did it help you to understand work in this field? What was helpful about the work experience? What was less helpful? What could be improved?
- G10 To what extent (if any) do you think your work experience played a role in helping you to obtain your current job? If it was helpful, why was it? What could be improved?
- G11 Apart from teaching and studying, were there any other aspects of your experience at your institution that helped you to get your current job?

Graduates from apprenticeships and traineeships

- G12 How did you undertake your studies as part of your apprenticeship or traineeship (for example, in block studies, one day a week off the job, on the job etc)? Was this the best way for you? If it was, why was it, or if it wasn't, why wasn't it?
- G13 What aspects of your training off-the-job were helpful in preparing you for work? What was less helpful? What could be improved?
- G14 What aspects of your training on-the-job were helpful in preparing you for trade/occupation? What was less helpful? What could be improved?
- G15 What kind of job did you expect you would get at the end of your apprenticeship/traineeship? Is your current job the job you expected you would be working in when you were doing your apprenticeship/traineeship? If it is, how did your apprenticeship/traineeship help you to get this job? If it wasn't, why do you think this was the case?
- G16 Apart from your direct on-the-job and off-the-job training, were there any other aspects of your experience as an apprentice/trainee that helped you to get your current job?

All graduates

- G17 Would you recommend this course to your friends? Why or why not?
- G18 What advice can you give us to support students/apprentices/trainees to be prepared for work and to obtain the kind of work they want? What can TAFEs/group training organisations/other VET institutions do? What can teachers do? What can employers do?
- G19 What advice can you give other students/apprentices/trainees on what they need to do to successfully finish their course? What would you tell them to do? What would you tell them was a waste of time?

About your future plans

- G20 Do you think you will do further study in this field? If you do, why?
- G21 Would you like to be working in your current industry in five years? How about in ten years? Why or why not?
- G22 Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Interview questions for learning advisors

About your work

- L1 What is your experience as a teacher/learning advisor?
- L2 What is your role in supporting students' learning? What sort of learning support activities do you spend most of your work time on?

Nature and design of pathways

- L3 Are pathways to further studies important for students? Why or why not?
- L4 What does a good pathway to further study look like? Why?
- L5 What knowledge and skills do students need for a transition to the next level of study?
- L6 What knowledge and skills do students need for a successful transition to the workplace?

Supporting students

- L7 What are the kinds of support that students need to successfully complete their current studies? To what extent do you think students get that support?
- L8 What are the kinds of support that students need to make a successful transition to the next level of study? To what extent do you think students get that support?
- L9 What support do students need for a successful transition to the workplace? To what extent do you think students get that support?
- L10 Is there a difference in supporting students' transitions for further study and work? Why? What can we do to ensure qualifications and pathways do both?

Partnerships and policy

- L11 What kinds of partnerships between teachers and learning advisors would be helpful in embedding the knowledge and skills that students need for further study and work? Do you think these kinds of partnerships exist? What can be done to create and support them?
- L12 Is there a role for partnerships between employers, teachers and learning advisors in supporting students in work placements or entering work? Why or why not? If there is, what would these partnerships look like? Are there specific challenges for apprentices and trainees?
- L13 What do different people (such as learning advisors, teachers, managers, educational institutions, senior management, curriculum developers, external bodies such as skills councils or professional bodies and employers) have to do to improve pathways into further study and into work?
- L14 What can government policy do to support pathways? Does it need to change, and why or why not?

L15 Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Interview questions for managers

About you

M1 Please briefly outline your experience in tertiary education.

About pathways

M2 Are pathways important and if they are, why? What should we be trying to achieve with pathways?

M3 Why are governments emphasising pathways so much? Do you think they have got it right? Why or why not?

M4 What are the different drivers for the development of pathways?

M5 What kinds of pathways work well, and what kinds work less well? Why? What factors support student transitions to higher level qualifications and how should pathways be structured as a result?

About developing pathways within your institution

M6 What sort of educational pathways do you have at your institution?

M7 What kinds of institutional and policy frameworks do you need to support pathways within your institution? What are the institutional challenges that arise from pathways, particularly for governance, quality assurance, funding and reporting?

M8 How do you ensure the quality of pathways within your institution, and ensure that they are defensible?

M9 How do you get institutional 'buy-in' within your institution for the development of pathways? What kinds of challenges arise, and what helps overcome these challenges?

M10 How do you 'broker' pathways within your institution and between institutions and sectors? Do you have administrative/policy staff with responsibility for pathways and if so, what role do they play?

M11 What role (if any) do teachers/lecturers play in developing pathways?

About institutional partnerships

M12 What kinds of institutional partnerships do we need to support pathways? What kind of educational pathways has your institution formed with other educational institutions?

M13 How do you obtain buy-in from other institutions to develop partnerships? What challenges have arisen and how have you managed them? What kind of governance arrangements are needed to support institutional partnerships? What other arrangements are needed to support institutional partnerships and pathways? What arrangements are needed to ensure the integrity and quality of outcomes?

M14 At the moment, employers don't play a big role in educational pathways between qualifications, sectors and institutions. Is there a role for employers in establishing, structuring and maintaining pathways? Why or why not? If there is, what would these pathways look like and what role would employers play? What kind of partnerships would be needed and how should they be supported? Do you know of any good examples of these kinds of partnerships?

Supporting transitions to work

M15 How can qualifications support students' transitions to work? How should they be designed? What role should work experience play? If it should play a role, how can it be structured? What does curriculum need to do to support students' transition to work?

M16 What would the relationship between employers and the workplace on the one hand, and programs and educational institutions on the other, look like in an ideal world? What do they actually look like now?

M17 Is work experience equally important for all programs? Why or why not? If work experience is important, how should it be designed, and does this differ between programs?

M18 How can we better link educational and occupational progression through pathways?

M19 How is work experience organised and paid for in your institution? What kind of institutional resources are needed to organise work experience or work placements, and what kind of challenges does this pose for your institution?

M20 Other than providing students with a work placement, what role should employers play in supporting students?

About improving pathways

M21 What do different people (such as teachers, managers, educational institutions, senior management, curriculum developers, external bodies such as skills councils or professional bodies and employers) have to do to improve pathways into further study and into work?

M22 What can government policy do to support pathways? Does it need to change, and why or why not?

M23 Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Interview questions for pathways officers

About you

P1 Please tell us a little bit about your role, and your experience working in tertiary education and your role in developing pathways.

About pathways

P2 Are pathways important and if they are, why? What should we be trying to achieve with pathways?

P3 Why are governments emphasising pathways so much? Do you think they have got it right? Why or why not?

P4 What kinds of pathways work well, and what kinds work less well? Why? What kinds of pathways support student transition into their new program? How should pathways be structured as a result?

P5 What factors support student transitions to higher level qualifications? What are some of the things that make it difficult?

About developing pathways within your institution

P6 What kind of educational pathways does your institution have?

P7 How do you go about developing pathways? What process do you use?

P8 Is it easier to construct and maintain pathways for some fields of education than for others? Could you please explain your thoughts on this?

P9 Is it easier to construct and maintain pathways from some types of institutions than for others? Could you please explain your thoughts on this?

P10 What are the different ways of initiating pathways? That is, by other institutions, by your institution, by teaching staff, departmental managers, senior management or by you specifically? Do the different ways that pathways are initiated affect how they operate? What are the drivers for the development of pathways initiated by different players?

P11 What kinds of relationships do you have within your institution to develop pathways? How do you go about doing that? What role do central administration and senior management play?

P12 What kinds of relationships do you have external to your institution to develop pathways? How do you go about doing that?

P13 What are the institutional challenges that arise from pathways, particularly for governance, quality assurance, funding and reporting? How do you ensure that pathways are defensible?

About improving pathways

P14 At the moment, employers don't play a big role in educational pathways between qualifications, sectors and institutions. Is there a role for employers in establishing, structuring and maintaining pathways? Why or why not? If there is, what would these pathways look like and what role would employers play? What kind of partnerships would be needed and how should they be supported? Do you know of any good examples of these kinds of partnerships?

P15 What do different people (such as learning advisors, teachers, managers, educational institutions, senior management, curriculum developers, external bodies such as skills councils or professional bodies and employers) have to do to improve pathways into further study and into work?

P16 What can government policy do to support pathways? Does it need to change, and why or why not?

P17 Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Interview questions for students

About you

What is your age?

- under 25 years
- 25–29 years
- 30–34 years
- 35–39 years
- 40 years and over

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male

What are you studying now?

Are you studying full time or part time?

- Full-time
- Part-time

Prior studies and work experience

S1 What year level did you get to at school, and when did you leave school?

S2 For students aged under 25 years: Did you do any paid work while at school? If you did paid work, did this have any impact on your views about the kind of job you wanted and the kind of qualification you needed to do? If it did, could you please tell us a little bit about it?

S3 For students aged under 25 years: Did you do any other study and work before starting your current course, and if so, could you please tell us a little bit about it?

S4 For students aged 25 years and over: Have you undertaken any other qualifications since leaving school, and if so, what were they?

S5 For students aged 25 years and over: Did you combine paid work and study in your previous studies? If so, could you please tell us about it?

Your current studies and work

S6 Why did you decide to do your current course?

S7 If you have studied previously, how did you find out that you could use your previous studies as a pathway into your current program? Was this information helpful? How can we improve the information that students receive?

- S8 If you have studied previously, did you intend to enter this program when you started your previous studies? When did you make the decision to continue your studies and what factors contributed to helping you make that decision?
- S9 What helped you in starting your current program and what was the biggest challenge for you?
- S10 If you have studied previously, how are your current studies different to your previous program? What did you expect studying in this program would be like? Has it turned out that way? Is it harder, easier or about the same as you expected? Why?
- S11 If you have studied previously, what helped you to move from that program into this one? Did your previous studies prepare you to study in your current program or in going to work? Why or why not? How could we improve support for students to go from lower level programs to higher level programs?
- S12 Could you please tell us a little bit about your fellow students and your contact with them? Are there other students in your program who have a similar study history to you? If there are, is this helpful for you (and if so why) or doesn't it matter?
- S13 Do you work in paid employment now? If not, we'll go to the next section. If so, could you please tell us what kind of work you do (in what field, whether it's part-time, full-time etc)? Does your current work relate to the course you are studying now? What impact does working have on your studies?
- S14 What is the attitude of your employer towards your study?

Your future plans and advice

- S15 Are you expecting to use your current studies to get a job, and if you are, what kind of job and how well prepared do you feel you are? Why?
- S16 What advice can you give us to support students to be prepared for work and to obtain the kind of work they want?
- S17 Do you plan to undertake any further study? If so, why, and when do you think you might do that?
- S18 Would you like to work in the same field in five years? How about ten years? Is there any other industry that you have an interest in working in?
- S19 Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for contribution to this research.

Interview questions for teachers/lecturers

About your work

- T1 Could you please briefly outline your experience as a teacher/lecturer?
- T2 What programs are you teaching in now?

About programs and educational pathways in your field

- T3 Are there pathways from other qualifications into your program, and from your program into other programs? If there are, could you please tell us about them? Are they important for students? Why or why not?
- T4 This is a question about students' experiences of transition into your program: if there are pathways into your program, please tell us about them and how well you think they work and why you think that? What do students need to be ready to come into your program, and in your experience, are they ready?
- T5 This is a question about students' transition from your program into another program: do your students articulate into programs (such as a higher level VET program or HE program)? If they do, what kinds of programs are they? What do your students need to ensure they can successfully study in the next program? What can the destination program do to support their transition once they get there? To your knowledge, does this happen?
- T6 What can we do to improve educational pathways and what can we do to support students to make these transitions? In your experience, what helps students to make these transitions?

About education and work for students in your field

- T7 To what extent can programs such as yours prepare students for work in your field? What are the possibilities and limitations? Do you have any suggestions about how programs such as yours could improve students' transition to work?
- T8 Do you think that the paid work that many students do to support themselves when they are studying contributes to their educational and future work outcomes, and why or why not? What are the possibilities and limitations?
- T9 Do students do work experience in this program? If they do, what is the extent and nature of their work experience? Is it an important part of the program, and if it is, why? How is work experience integrated into your program? Is it assessed? Overall, how can we improve the way work placements are integrated into programs?
- T10 For teachers of apprentices and trainees: how well does off-the-job training support on-the-job training, and overall, and what kind of balance do we need between on-the-job and off-the-job training? How should we structure the relationship between on-the-job and off-the-job training?

T11 How easy is it to get work placements for your students? How are they organised? What are the challenges?

T12 Other than providing students with a work placement, what role should employers play in supporting students? For teachers of apprentices and trainees: what role should employers play in supporting apprentices and trainees?

About building frameworks to support student pathways to further study and work

T13 What do different people (such as teachers, managers, educational institutions, senior management, curriculum developers, external bodies such as skills councils or professional bodies and employers) have to do to improve pathways into further study and into work?

T14 What can government policy do to support pathways? Does it need to change, and why or why not? If it does need to change, how?

T15 What kind of relationship (if any) do teaching staff in your program/field need to have with other teachers/lecturers in programs that send you students, or programs that you send students to? Why?

T16 What kind of relationship (if any) do teaching staff in your field need to have with industry (broadly defined), and why? How is this done? What is your experience?

T17 Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for your contribution to this research.