

5 of our final year interns in 2004 Virginia, Steven, Simon, Melissa and Jessica write about the stress of completing studies and being prepared for graduate recruitment applications

Article 1: By Virginia Liu

You're facing five assignments due for every subject and you're stressed. Experienced that before? Yes, I think most students have.

From personal experience, it certainly is a pressured time. But how does one overcome it when you still have to find a job in your field, work a part-time job and try to finish all your remaining assignments.

"Take it easy!" that's what I kept hearing in my head. Everything will work out. And so it has. I've been meaning to write this article for the Internship so other students get a feel of what it is about, yet because of all my assignments, exams and looking for jobs, I've been held up.

The best advice I could give final year students is to "take it easy". There is always a chance out there. Don't give up. Always finish what has arrived at your door. And there will always be time to do other things. Always try something other than your study. That's what I did this year, because it's my final year. And I applied for this Internship. It was a great experience! To be honest, sometimes I didn't want to go because I was always thinking 'I've got study to do and won't have enough time' but you know what - I think this Internship has helped me out heaps. It was a nice release. Not having to work as hard as my part time job, yet doing something that could help my future. Also meeting new friends that were also in their final year and looking for jobs, especially helping out with the Careers Fair and having to meet different companies and find out what they are looking for in terms of employees.

I've had no such luck in a job yet, but I think from this Internship, I've got a boost and more of a direction of what I would like to do than I would've had if I didn't apply. So hopefully, with me continuing looking around, I'll be able to find one.

Article 2: by Steven Chen

The final year of university is a stressful year for all students, because of two major factors. First, students need to cope with lots of difficult assignments and projects; secondly, just the thought of life after university places a lot of pressure on students.

Many global companies do offer graduate programs, but they usually come with application closing dates, interview dates and so on ranging from the end of March through to May (or sometimes June). So how do students apply for graduate jobs, complete important assignments, and juggle part-time and voluntary work?

You should be aware that towards the middle to the end of the semester, you could be bombarded with assignments and large projects. Therefore, you are advised to sort out your course work early. Interviews for many graduate roles are often held during the final stages of the semester and there is nothing you can do to change that. However, the application closing dates are often set from the end of March to mid April, meaning that between weeks 6 to 12 of semester one you have relatively less work. Hence it is a good idea to take advantage of this period of the semester to work on your applications.

Pay close attention to selection criteria and also have an understanding of the companies; background research is essential. Prepare your application letter and resumé according to the selection criteria and specific company information you have found – at this stage it is wise to visit a careers counselor for useful advice.

Do not leave online applications until the last minute; instead print out the application form, answer the questions slowly and remember to proof read. Once you have finalised your responses to the selection criteria, you can cut and paste the answers and submit your applications.

Following submission, begin to prepare for potential assessment tests and interviews. There are practice books in the Careers Library to guide you along the way, and many websites offering sample assessment tests. Make use of these resources and practice! Also, when you have free time, you should definitely sign up for career sessions, especially the ones concerning resumé writing and interview techniques. As with preparation for your assessment tests, practice, practice and practice!

To sum up, applying for graduate jobs is not about just "sitting in front of a computer, point and click". It takes a lot of time and effort. Once you are about half way through the semester, you will need to complete multiple assignments for almost all of your subjects. If you leave your job applications until then, you put yourself into a very difficult position, as you need to cope with assignments and job applications at the same time.

Article 3: by Simon Zannis

Applying for graduate positions is a stressful experience by its very nature. However through good organisation you can alleviate some pressure and hopefully improve your performance in the whole recruitment process. My experiences are centred on applying for accounting positions, however the pressures and tips will be applicable to applying for any type of graduate position.

Personally the most stressful time was the period just prior to the close of applications. I already had a fair idea of which firms I wanted to apply to, however I still found myself submitting applications at the last minute without properly researching each firm. Thorough researching of each firm serves two purposes. Your application, especially cover letters will be significantly improved and you will know whether you actually want to work for a firm. Based on anecdotal evidence from friends there is nothing worse than attending an interview for a position that you intend to later decline.

By completing the Internship you have the distinct advantage of a great resource at your fingertips. All the staff at Monash University Careers and Employment are knowledgeable and offer great hints and tips almost each time you speak to them. You also learn of the vast array of resources available to you in the careers library. There are folders on many individual firms that can help with research as well as many books on interview and resumé skills.

Finally you can't afford to lose track of your university studies. Best advice would be to start researching and completing application forms straight after careers fair. Hopefully after the fair you will have a good understanding of the type of firm you want to work for.

P.S. if you want your resumé checked book early to give yourself time to refine your resumé and perhaps have it rechecked!