International Students: A Guide for Australian Employers
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HOW CAN AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYERS BENEFIT FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

Australian employers need a diverse and sustainable talent pool to fuel innovation growth, and remain competitive in a global economy.

The Asian region provides Australia with unparalleled opportunities for growth. The ‘Australia’s Job Futures’ report (Asialink Business, 2015) found that by 2030, services have the potential to become Australia’s number one export to Asia and support in excess of 1 million Australian jobs. These jobs can be generated through increasing exports of services, as well as expanding offshore operations of Australian businesses.

However, this growth is largely dependent on Australian businesses continuing to build strong ties with Asia. These ties are best enabled via the development of ‘Asian’ skills capability and an internationally orientated workforce. Engaging with international students and graduates can help Australian businesses enhance their understanding of the business and social etiquette, cultural nuances, language and communication styles of the regions from which these students come, in addition to building a network of relationships.

Businesses who may not be considering overseas expansion can also benefit significantly from cultural diversity within organisations. Organisations that are culturally diverse are known to better understand and represent their customer base. They can also be more innovative, have more engaged and satisfied employees, and are more profitable overall. When over a quarter of Australia’s population are born overseas – and a further 20 per cent have a foreign-born parent – businesses cannot ignore the importance of leveraging the benefits of cultural diversity.

International students represent a valuable and largely untapped resource for Australian organisations. This guide serves as a starting point for all employers who wish to explore engaging with international students – as part of a mentoring program, work-integrated learning placement, internship or ongoing graduate role.

“We’ve experienced some great international candidates who have excelled in their role by building their confidence.”

Bill Huynh
Interior Secrets

Find out more at ieaa.org.au/employers
# Section 1: Why Engage International Students?

Perceptions and realities: Why some employers are reluctant to include international students in their internship and graduate programs.

A competitive graduate labour market, shifting visa legislation and ‘fear of the unknown’ deters many employers from hiring or engaging international students. This decision however, may be based on a number of misconceptions. This section aims to dispel some of the most pertinent myths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Reality</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is no reason to employ international students when there are so many local students who need jobs.</td>
<td>Allowing international students to apply for internships and graduate programs significantly increases the talent pool ensuring employers can select the very best students and graduates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If I employ an international student, they’ll just want to go back home after a year or so.</td>
<td>Many international students wish to stay in Australia after graduation and, if offered a long-term opportunity, they are very likely to accept and show commitment to their employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International students can’t speak English.</td>
<td>To obtain a student visa to study in Australia, most international students must demonstrate their English language proficiency through a standardised test such as IELTS, TOEFL, Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic, Cambridge English: Advanced CAE.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The stipulated minimum score depends on level of study and nationality. International and domestic applicants (whose first language is not English) must meet English language proficiency requirements for entry into academic programs at all universities and VET providers. Most universities, however, require a higher score to meet their academic entry criteria and offer additional English support. Therefore, this means that students will minimally have ‘an operational command of the language, generally handle complex language well, and understand detailed reasoning.’</td>
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<td>I don’t think an international student would ‘fit in’ at my workplace – I don’t have any other non-Australian staff.</td>
<td>There are multiple benefits associated with a culturally diverse workforce. Having a staff member who brings different skills, attitudes and ideas can increase the level of innovation in the workplace. Furthermore, exposing current staff to different cultures and ways of working is essential in today’s globalised labour market.</td>
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<tr>
<td>International students can’t work in Australia.</td>
<td>Many students and graduates are permitted to work in Australia. Different international students have different working rights, which you can check using the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) website (see page 12).</td>
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Business case for international student recruitment: internships and post-study

Employers looking for student interns or graduates should consider international students as a key source of talent. The benefits of hiring an international student at graduate or intern level include:

- Access to intelligence about overseas markets, including supply chain information and cultural information which may prove useful to the business in the long term
- Bi or tri-lingual staff who can effectively communicate with overseas clients/suppliers
- Ability to move international students to overseas offices with ease (visa dependent)
- Opportunity to train current staff in managing staff from different cultures/backgrounds – this may be particularly useful if the organisation is considering offshoring
- Fresh eyes – new ideas and approaches to doing business
- Enthusiasm – international students and graduates often bring unbridled enthusiasm for their role, organisation and new country. This, in turn, motivates other staff to better appreciate their current situations.

For many Australian businesses, these benefits have translated into the following tangible results:

- Just over one fifth of international graduates manage or control an international supply chain (Outcomes and Impact of International Education, IDP 2008)
- Many small businesses have engaged international students to expand into and access new export markets for their products and services
- International students have helped regional employers sustain and diversify their businesses
- Some entrepreneurial graduates have created new jobs and contributed to the local economy and bilateral trade
- In disciplines such as science, engineering and technology, where there is an over representation of international students, some innovative graduates work in high-end research and commercialisation to enhance Australia’s global competitive advantage.

International students: personal qualities

Beyond the business benefits of international students, employers often find that international students possess many beneficial personal qualities, including:

- Maturity and independence, gained from moving overseas and living independently
- Resilience in the workplace, as a result of different and often challenging life experiences
- A good work ethic and appreciation of all opportunities
- Cross-cultural understanding, patience and empathy

International students can therefore provide many benefits, both business and personal, to employers at internship and graduate level.
SECTION 2: WHAT TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES CAN YOU PROVIDE?

Engaging international students is often much easier than it is perceived to be by employers. In fact, there are many different types of opportunities Australian employers can provide.

Mentoring
Mentoring is a great way to connect with current international students to share insights and develop closer links with education providers. Mentoring also enables you to reflect on your own knowledge and work practices and improve your leadership, communication and coaching skills.

It’s also a great way to meet potential employees and have access to a network of new generation thinkers with fresh perspectives.

Many education providers have formalised mentoring programs. For more information, contact the careers office at your local education provider.

Unpaid placements
Unpaid internships are considered legal in the following circumstances:

1. If the work is part of a vocational placement. This includes formal work experience that is part of a university subject or a registered education or training course – such as a Professional Year Program or a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course.

2. In some circumstances, if the work is performed for a not-for-profit organisation

3. If a person works for a business to gain experience in a particular occupation, provided that:
   - The person doesn’t do ‘productive’ work, that would otherwise be done by a paid employee
   - The main beneficiary of the unpaid work is the person doing it, not the employer
   - The unpaid worker receives a meaningful learning experience.

Where an employer engages a student in circumstance type 2–3, they must also provide personal accident insurance and public liability, covering bodily injury or property damage, while participating in the internship. Students undertaking professional practice or experience as a course/subject requirement and/or to gain experience in their field of study are in some instances covered by the university’s public liability and personal accident insurance.

For more information, visit www.fairwork.gov.au/pay

Paid internships or other temporary, paid opportunities
Employers wanting to offer international students paid internships, or other temporary paid work opportunities, are able to do so both during, and after, students have completed their studies.

Employers looking to hire international students during their study can do so, as long as the student’s visa conditions are met. For example, if an employer wants to hire an international student during their studies, and the student holds a 573 – Higher Education visa or 572 – VET visa, the employer could offer the student the following:

- A part-time job (maximum 20 hours per week), on a fixed-term basis
- A casual job, as long as the hours worked do not exceed 40 per fortnight during semester
- A work-integrated learning (WIL) placement or project approved by the student’s institution.
As with any other employee, employers hiring international students into paid positions must provide them with an employment agreement, as required by Fair Work Australia. The salary or wage equivalent to the relevant Modern Award Rate or Minimum Award Rate varies by individual disciplines, occupations and industry sectors.

**Work integrated learning**

Work integrated learning (WIL) integrates academic learning with practical workplace experience through engagement with industry and community partners.

WIL is aimed at improving graduate employability by giving students valuable practical experience directly related to their course of study. It also improves the transition from university to work and productivity outcomes for the employer and the economy.

WIL can include work placements such as internships, shadowing programs, cooperative and field education as well as practical projects with industry and community organisations.

In March 2015, a comprehensive National WIL Strategy was released. The strategy aims to build the productive capacity of Australia’s workforce, improve graduate job prospects and meet the skills needs of employers. For more information, visit [acen.edu.au/resources/national-wil-strategy](acen.edu.au/resources/national-wil-strategy).

**Graduate programs/or other permanent, paid employment**

Employers wanting to hire international students on a permanent basis will be able to do so if the international student has permanent work rights.

If the student does not yet have permanent work rights, employers are able to offer employment on a fixed-term basis commensurate with the length of the international student’s visa, until the student obtains permanent work rights.

**State (or Territory) sponsorship of international graduates**

Some state and territory governments sponsor international candidates to help fill skills shortages in their labour market. These schemes are not designed to displace local Australians or push wages down by under cutting local labour market, but to support employers in regions where the required skill sets are in short supply.

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<th>NORTHERN TERRITORY</th>
<th>The Northern Territory Government considers state nomination for international graduates who have successfully completed at least two years of full-time eligible study at Charles Darwin University (<a href="bit.ly/1Nvdf7C">bit.ly/1Nvdf7C</a>).</th>
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<td>QUEENSLAND</td>
<td>In Queensland, masters students with an offer of employment in the relevant skilled occupation are eligible for state sponsorship (<a href="bit.ly/1YR9fPy">bit.ly/1YR9fPy</a>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>State nomination provides a pathway to permanent residency for international graduates in South Australia (<a href="bit.ly/26qbsas">bit.ly/26qbsas</a>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>TASMANIA</td>
<td>International graduates at the University of Tasmania or TasTAFE who meet visa requirements for certain skilled migration sub-classes are eligible for Tasmanian state nomination (<a href="bit.ly/1UdJObU">bit.ly/1UdJObU</a>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>The Victorian Government offers a streamlined pathway to state nomination for international PhD graduates with fast track application processing within two weeks (<a href="bit.ly/26qb9fR">bit.ly/26qb9fR</a>).</td>
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Employer sponsorship of international graduates

When there is a genuine and systemic shortage of skilled workers, and there are no suitably qualified Australian workers available, eligible employers can consider visa options, which involves either temporary or permanent sponsorship. There are also concessions for regional employers, to help supply their skill needs. These options can be explored especially when graduates are unable to obtain a permanent visa on their own, after working for the employer part-time or full-time, under other visa categories which have full work rights such as a student visa, temporary graduate visa or bridging visa.

Business sponsors are required to pay their overseas workers the market salary rate and provide terms and conditions of employment that would apply to an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident doing equivalent work in the same workplace. Employers engaging foreign workers must ensure that they not only comply with Australian workplace laws but also immigration laws.

International graduates may be eligible to undertake a job ready test for migration skills assessment if the occupation relevant to a vocational education and training course is on either of the following lists:

- Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL) *(Replaced the previous ‘Skilled Occupation List’ on 19 April 2017)*
- Short-term Skilled Occupation List (STSOL) *(Replaced the previous ‘Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List’ on 19 April 2017)*


Qualified candidates can then submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s (DIBP) SkillSelect database. Employers can search SkillSelect using a range of criteria and consider sponsorship for the right candidates. This can reduce the cost and time taken to recruit.

**Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457)**

The Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) allows a skilled worker to take up employment in Australia in their nominated occupation, for their approved business sponsor, for up to four years. In 2015–16, there were over 90,000 primary 457 visa holders in Australia – a number of whom were former overseas graduates.

In April 2017, the Australian Government announced a number of changes to the Temporary Worker (Skilled) 457 visa, including a reduction in the number of eligible occupations.

Further, the 457 visa will be abolished and replaced by a new Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) visa, effective from March 2018. The TSS visa will offer a short-term stream of up to two years and a medium-term stream of up to four years. The TSS visa requires two years relevant work experience and tightens the criteria for permanent residency at the conclusion of the visa period. There is no residency pathway under the two year stream, while the four year stream will see the permanent residence pathway eligibility period extended from two to three years.

**Additional schemes**

There are also permanent visa options such as Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) and Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS).

The Migration Institute of Australia can help access professionals that support Australian businesses in the recruitment of skilled workers and international students.

SECTION 3: WHAT POLICIES APPLY FOR ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

The two key considerations for employers hiring or engaging international students are:

1. What work rights does the student have, during and after their studies?
2. What do I need to consider from an Australian employment law perspective?

The following will provide a brief outline of policy relating to hiring international students.

During study: International student visas and working rights

International students coming to study in Australia will be granted one of a number of student visas outlined in Appendix 1 (p.26). NB: These visa categories will be consolidated from 1 July 2016. In general, the following work rights apply:

- Students cannot work until they have commenced their course
- Once they have commenced, students can work up to 40 hours per fortnight during teaching and exam periods
- When their course isn’t in session, there are no restrictions on the number of hours they can work
- Students holding a postgraduate research visa have no restrictions on the hours they can work, even during their study.
- Voluntary work – or work performed as part of a formal, registered course – is not included in the 40 hour per fortnight maximum.

For more information, visit www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud/More/Work-conditions-for-Student-visa-holders

Part-time and casual work: international student visas and work rights

As most students have at least part-time work rights throughout their studies, many seek part-time employment opportunities.

Although all students benefit most from employment opportunities that relate to their chosen area of study, any form of paid, part-time employment can bring many benefits for both the employer, and the student.

Therefore, if employers are looking for highly motivated and dedicated part-time or casual staff, international students are a great option to consider.

Post-study: international student visas and work rights

Post-study, most international students qualify for visas that allow them full work rights for a specified period in Australia. The most common visas that they may be eligible for are detailed in Appendix 2 (p.26).

The Post-Study Work visa offers extended options for working in Australia to graduates who have completed a bachelor, master or doctoral degree in Australia. The duration of this visa is two, three or four years, depending on the highest educational qualification they have obtained. International students who graduate from a diploma or advanced diploma that meets the Australian standard for an occupation on the Skilled Occupation List are eligible for an 18-month visa. This visa does not restrict the type of work or the number of hours.
Many employers believe that international students require employer sponsorship and are hence more expensive to hire, but this is simply not the case. International students in these visa categories have full work rights for specified durations, and do not represent any additional expense to employers.

In addition, international students may be eligible for other visas – particularly if they choose to seek employment in regional areas. See the Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s (DIBP) website for more information.

Checking work rights

Employers must ensure that all prospective employees have the legal right to work in Australia before making an offer of employment. It is recommended that employers utilise the free 24-hour online service, Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) to check information on work entitlements of various types of visa holders including bridging visa and working holiday.


Employers considering international students can then be assured that their potential employee has a visa that allows them to work part-time or full-time for the duration of the internship or graduate program.

Employment law and international students

Employers wanting to hire international students need to abide by Australian employment law. Conditions set out by Fair Work Australia – including the provision of fair wages, breaks, leave entitlements and other conditions – cover any individual working in Australia. As such, organisations employing international students must treat them as they would any other employee.

Employers also need to recognise special needs of young workers, including their study requirements and ensure appropriate training is provided based on level of experience, skills and knowledge.
SECTION 4: WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE I ENGAGE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

As with any other junior employees, the key to hiring international students is preparation. Therefore, before you hire an international student, the following steps are recommended:

Develop a job/project description

Providing the student/graduate with a job/project description will both ease transition into the workplace and support the learning experience. The job/project description could include the following:

- Tasks the student will complete
- Timeframe it should take to complete certain tasks
- Technology the student will be required to use
- Stakeholders the student will need to interact with
- An idea of ‘what success looks like’, so the student’s performance can be evaluated at a later date.

Work integrated learning (WIL) requirements

- Negotiate the WIL placement
- Allocate a supervisor
- Sign a WIL placement agreement with the student’s education provider.

Managing organisational expectations

Managing organisational expectations is also important prior to hiring an international student. Ensure that the student’s prospective manager has planned to put aside time to meet and induct the student into the organisation and provide training and support where required.

The student’s team and other organisational stakeholders should also be informed of the internship/post-study arrangement, primarily so they are aware that the student may need additional support/guidance.

All things considered, planning for an international student is important, but essentially no different from planning for other new employees (except for specific WIL placement requirements mentioned above).
“I started my journey at Mantra as an intern in accounts receivable. One month after I finished my internship, my boss called me and asked if I’d be interested in a full-time position. Of course I said yes.”

Siew Hui Tiong
Mantra Group

 SECTION 5: HOW DO I ENGAGE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

Employers who are considering hiring or engaging international students have a range of options available to them for sourcing talented students.

Sourcing students: paid, post-study opportunities

Resources available to employers looking to advertise post-study opportunities to international students include:

■ Graduate Opportunities – graduateopportunities.com
■ Career Hub – careerhub.com.au

The benefit of advertising on university/TAFE related job boards is that organisations have access to a wide variety of students from all universities. Jobs advertised on these job boards do attract a large volume of students, so they are recommended for large organisations that may have more than one vacancy to fill.

The best way to connect with international students is through university or education provider career centres. Some of the options include:

■ Attending university or TAFE careers fairs
■ Attending industry-specific careers fairs and events
■ Hosting an information session about your organisation at various education providers
■ Inviting students to your organisation for a tour or experience day
■ Participating in virtual career development fairs targeted at tertiary students.

On-campus careers and employment staff can provide more information about the best way to connect with potential international students from their institutions.

For work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) can also link employers to education providers. Visit acen.edu.au for more details.
Sourcing students: paid internships

Although it is possible to source international students for internships in the same way they are sourced for post-study opportunities, many organisations may find themselves overwhelmed by the volume of applications they receive, especially if they only have one or a small number of vacancies.

For paid internships, it is recommended that organisations consider working with universities and VET providers. WIL placements can be known as internships, Industry-based Learning, Practicum Placement or Professional Practice. The WIL model is an increasingly popular solution to sourcing students.

These arrangements:
■ Often include free advertising, recruitment and shortlisting services (the education provider presents the organisation with suitable candidates)
■ Vary in length, from three months to one year
■ May involve the student working full-time (depending on their subject/discipline)
■ May or may not include payment to the student.

Sourcing students: unpaid opportunities

For employers looking to engage a domestic or international student for an unpaid opportunity, it is recommended that they do so through a vocational placement arrangement. Many universities, as well as private providers within the VET sector, offer these types of arrangements. The three main types of unpaid placements are detailed below:

University unpaid placements

More universities are now offering unpaid placements for their students. University unpaid placements:
■ Are shorter in duration than paid WIL placements, usually between 100 hours and 13 weeks
■ Are typically completed part-time
■ Have stricter requirements for supervision and work completed than paid placements.
■ Must be completed at certain times of the year (typically within the university semester)
■ Insurance is provided by the university.

VET unpaid placements

Students enrolled in some accredited courses at Certificate III, IV and Diploma levels are required to undertake a vocational placement to meet the accreditation/licensing requirements of the respective professional bodies. Such work placements need to be approved by the TAFE/RTO and could range from 160 to 280 hours. There are varying requirements for the duration, and type, of unpaid placement that the student needs to undertake. Employers should always aim to verify the requirements of the placement with the VET education provider before engaging the student.

International students are not eligible for apprenticeships as it is a scheme subsidised by the Australian Government for Australian citizens and permanent residents.

Course coordinators and industry liaison officers in these education institutions will be able to provide more information about available unpaid placements.
Private provider unpaid placements and Professional Year

International students often complete unpaid internships as part of a ‘Professional Year Program’. For the Professional Year, the internships:

- Are typically 12 weeks in duration
- Are usually full-time
- Can be completed at any time during the year
- Insurance is provided by the internship provider.

Recruitment and selection

There are a number of different approaches an organisation can take to the recruitment and selection of international students, depending on the number of vacancies they are advertising. For an organisation that is advertising multiple vacancies, a multi-step process may be required. This process may include:

- Video or phone interviews
- Psychometric testing
- Assessment centres/group interviews
- Final one-on-one interviews
- Reference checks.

Organisations who have a single vacancy may only wish to have a one or two step process.

Managing organisational expectations in the recruitment and selection process is key. Many international students may not have attended a formal interview before, therefore nerves must be taken into account when assessing student’s interview performance. Students from some countries might also exhibit certain cultural traits, such as not engaging in direct eye contact with senior work colleagues.

Selection criteria

Be as clear and specific as possible when detailing what you are looking for. Some possible inclusions might be:

- **Specific course enrolment**: If you are looking for graduates from certain disciplines of study – such as accounting, engineering, science, IT – from an accredited degree.

- **Professional body registration**: If candidates must also satisfy the requirements for entry into professional bodies such as CPA Australia, Engineers Australia, Australian Computer Society.

- **Specify competencies and personal attributes** that you are looking for and tips on growing a career as a graduate within your organisation.

- **Location**: If studying at an Australian campus of an education provider, and have completed at least two years of the degree at that campus, at the time of application is mandatory. Students who don’t meet the two-year study rule may not be eligible to apply for a post study work visa when they complete their study program.

- **English language**: Stipulate minimum English language competency for successful labour market integration and workplace effectiveness. IELTS, TOEFL iBT, PTE Academic and CAE are generally accepted tests to demonstrate English language proficiency.

English language tests normally assess a candidate’s proficiency in four components: listening, reading, writing and speaking. The format, scale, scoring, methodology and availability of results vary. Employers can choose the selection criterion that is fit for purpose and seek professional advice before setting their standards (see example using Pearson Test of English at https://ncsbn.org/NCLEX_technicalbrief_PTE_2010.pdf).

CASE STUDY: SOURCING MANDARIN SPEAKERS

Due to an increase in demand from Chinese tourists, a Sydney tourism organisation contacted the Careers Office at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) to find a Mandarin speaking tour guide for one of its bestselling tours.

UTS Careers promoted the job opportunity to its international students from China via an online platform, UTS CareerHub. It also invited the employer to the UTS International Student Careers Fair (China Region) to increase application numbers.

As a result, the employer successfully found a pool of desired candidates for their vacant positions.
Permanent residency or citizenship as a selection criterion

Under the Public Service Act 1999, Australian citizens and permanent residents can be treated preferentially in terms of recruitment to the Australian Public Service. In the private sector, all State and Territory anti-discrimination laws prohibit a corresponding right to preferential treatment on the basis of nationality. This legislation affects all stages of the employment relationship, including recruitment, training, conditions of employment, transfer, promotion, retrenchment and termination of employment. There are some exceptions contained in the Equal Opportunity Act. Legal exemptions are however granted to private companies for positions that require an Australian defence security clearance in order to comply with International Traffic and Arms Regulations (ITAR) requirements. The Racial Discrimination Act however does not explicitly refer to ‘visa status’ (i.e. people who have a temporary visa and work rights from those who have a permanent right to live and work in Australia).

Offer management

When making an offer to a student, ensure that the offer is in writing, and includes the following:

- Type of offer (i.e. paid, unpaid, part-time, full-time)
- Duration of engagement
- Pay rate (if applicable)
- Start date, time, and office location
- Manager name and contact details

The offer should also be accompanied by an employment or volunteer contract if the arrangement is unpaid and not hosted through a university or internship provider.

Considerations when setting English language requirements

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) requires an overall score equivalent to at least an IELTS 5.0 for the employer sponsored 457 work visa for any occupation including an accountant. CPA Australia requires an IELTS test score of at least 7.0 in each of the four components, whereas some employers recruiting international graduates for graduate roles in accounting require IELTS 8.0.

When examining performance of IELTS test takers in 2013, the mean band score – even among those who nominated English as their first language – was below 8.0. About 5 per cent of the candidates who took the test for employment purposes obtained scores of 8.0 and above (http://www.ielts.org/researchers/analysis_of_test_data/percentile_ranks_2013-1.aspx).

Similar analysis of TOEFL iBT test and scores is also available for comparison (https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/94227_unlweb.pdf). It could be argued an overall band score of 8.0 is too high and even exclusionary, except in the context of the legal and teaching professions which demand higher levels of proficiency in some components. Caution needs to be taken when setting English language requirements. Unrealistic language requirements may exclude some highly skilled international graduates from applying.
CASE STUDY: ACCOMPLISH INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

Many Australian universities' careers services offer work ready programs for international students to help them adapt to the Australian workplace. Employers can take advantage by engaging with existing work ready programs.

A great example is the University of Technology Sydney’s Accomplish International Program. UTS Accomplish International is a year long program offered exclusively to international students. It aims to increase the employability skills of students and prepare them for the Australian workplace.

Upon graduation, international students are equipped with the essential skills to meet employment demands, such as the ability to communicate with influence, problem solving, emotional intelligence, leadership and team work.

Employers can benefit from such work ready programs to attract and find suitable candidates. The program offers a three-way agreement between the employer, students and the university. UTS covers the insurance and provides ongoing support while students complete their internship. Each student is required to obtain 100 hours in work practice.
SECTION 6: HOW DO I MANAGE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

After hiring an international student, as with all other junior and new employees, some additional support and guidance is recommended in their first few weeks. The following is recommended:

First week induction
As with all other employees, on a student’s first day it is recommended that organisations provide the following information:

- Guidance on standard business hours and break times
- Overview of business technology (e.g. email and phone procedures)
- Introduction to work responsibilities
- OHS, security and fire information.

In addition to the above, within the first week organisations should also endeavour to:

- Not only explain the tasks required by the student, but explain ‘what success should look like’ so the student, and the organisation, can adequately assess their performance
- Discuss what professional behaviours are required – remember this could be the student’s first ever job
- If comfortable, have an honest conversation about the differences in the way business is conducted here in Australia, versus the student’s country of origin. This will establish a mutual understanding between the organisation and student
- Provide advice to the student on how they should interact with their manager (i.e. the student may not feel immediately comfortable interrupting their manager with questions, so they may need to be coached on how best to do this). In industries where not seeking clarification can result in serious consequences – such as engineering and mining, health care and community welfare – additional coaching may be required to ensure the employer carries no residual OHS risk.

Creating support mechanisms: mentoring and monitoring
Ongoing support is the key to success for any domestic or international student engagement. Support can be offered in many different forms, however, at a minimum organisations should:

- Provide the student with a mentor or buddy (someone who isn’t their Line Manager) who they can turn to for questions that they may not be comfortable asking their manager
- Regularly monitor the student and explicitly ask if they need any additional support/assistance, especially in the first few weeks.
- Organise a weekly informal catch up between the student and their line manager where they discuss their overall progress and provide any general feedback
- Conduct a formal performance review where relevant so the student receives formal guidance on their performance (at the end of placement for internships or annually for ongoing employment)

For more information on work integrated learning, see page 13.
SECTION 7:
WHAT TO DO AFTER EMPLOYING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

For organisations that have engaged international students in internships, there may be some additional requirements post-placement. These may include:

- Reporting to education or internship providers on the student’s performance
- Reporting to management or HR on the performance of the student and the overall success of the placement.
- Providing the student with a reference for future employment.

If an organisation is satisfied with a student’s performance, they should endeavour to keep in touch with the student, even offer them an ongoing opportunity if available. Many international students value the chance to create a professional network.
Many organisations have successfully recruited international students and found that they have made a profound and lasting impact on their businesses. Here we provide some notable case studies.

**Ericsson: Multinational company**

Ericsson has experienced considerable success from recruiting international students through WIL and internship providers, and subsequently offering them graduate positions. Ericsson’s Graduate Program Manager, Teigan Margetts, commented that:

“Given that we are a global company who is investing heavily in our offshore operations, international students have been invaluable in helping us to set up, and roll out, many different projects overseas. They have also really helped us to develop cross-cultural management training.”

Regarding the general demeanour and success of international students, Teigan said:

“In terms of tenure and commitment, we’ve really seen some great results from our international student grads, compared to our domestic ones, actually. Many have also gone on to join regional and global talent pools, which I believe shows that their background and demeanour really set them up for success in international business.”

International students do a great job because they bring their culture into an office as well. It broadens everyone’s horizons.”

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Jim Dorash
Softball Australia

Find out more at [ieaa.org.au/employers](http://ieaa.org.au/employers)
Kepler Analytics: Small business

David Mah, a former international graduate from the University of Melbourne, has founded several businesses in which he employs both local and international graduates. Bluesky, one of his earlier start-ups successfully raised $700,000 of venture capital and expanded nationally.

Bluesky company does not have a structured internship. Instead, the company prefers to engage with international students while they are studying, through part-time work, or projects during summer or winter breaks, which can then lead to a full-time role after graduation. Bluesky offers employer sponsorship for exceptional talent retention and use the services of a registered migration agent to manage the process.

“I find it very effective to tap into the incredible talent pool onshore and attract the right candidates through invited lectures and talks delivered on campus,” concluded Mr Mah.

Barwon Health: Regional employer

Barwon Health is the largest employer in the Geelong and Surf Coast region, employing over 6,000 people. A wide range of experienced and qualified health care workers are in shortage across the region. Barwon Health works closely with the Geelong Region Skilled Migration Project, a Victorian Government funded program to assist regional employers to source, attract and retain overseas skilled professionals to meet skill shortages that cannot be filled from the local labour market.

Michael Smith, Head of Oral Health at University Hospital, Geelong (which forms part of Barwon Health), confirms that it has been useful to have people from different countries with varying skill sets working in his organisation: “Employing overseas skilled professionals has given us the ability to choose from a range of candidates, which has provided us with more opportunities for our business.”

A small number of departments in Barwon Health offer work experience placements as part of a coordinated program to support recruitment and workforce strategy. International students enrolled in various accredited nursing programs undertake clinical placements mandated as part of their course. They must then meet the registration requirements of the relevant professional bodies to transition to a full-time role when they graduate. With an aging population, many are absorbed into the aged care sector.

However, sponsored workers are typically overseas skilled experienced professionals who are happy to live and work in the region. Ms Therese Cotter, Divisional Nursing Director, Medical Services says, “It doesn’t cost the organisation anything, except for a two-year employment contract and the turnover risk is minimal. If organisations have an overseas skilled professional working for them for just two years, they will see a positive change in their business.”
Our Community / Smarty Grants: Social enterprise

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise and ‘Certified B’ company that provides advice and tools for Australia’s 600,000 community groups and schools, and practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government.

The group has offered several intern roles to undergraduate and postgraduate students over recent years, typically two days a week on a casual basis. This year they have also selected a candidate to complete a more structured industry placement. As an equal opportunity employer, advertisements for internship roles are open to all. “Who they are and what skills they have to offer, their enthusiasm and attitude is what matters,” according to Sarah Barker, Development Manager, who is involved in the selection, mentoring of interns.

Almost two thirds of applicants and candidates who are offered positions are international students, although the organisation’s recruitment policy and process is not designed to actively target them. One possible explanation is due to the over representation of international students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses at a tertiary level.

Residency status is not a barrier to selecting the best talent. The organisation has found that candidates can gain skills and do valuable work within limitations of student visas, and at least on one occasion a candidate has then qualified for permanent residency without the need for employer sponsorship.

CONCLUSION: WHY ENGAGE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

Employers stand to benefit in many ways from engaging international students.

International students offer employers the chance to diversify their organisations, enhance the cultural knowledge and skills of their workforce, expand local and international networks and access global supply chains.

Changes in visa policy mean that hiring international students is also far easier than in the past. International graduates now have access to post-study work rights that employers will find easy to understand and verify. There are also many opportunities for employers to access international students through structured programs – such as WIL and professional placements – offered at the majority of Australian tertiary institutions.

The introduction of post-study work rights, along with expanded work experience and internship programs, offer employers significant opportunities to reap the benefits of engaging with international students.
**APPENDIX: STUDY VISAS AND WORK VISAS**

Please note: from 1 July 2016, visa sub-classes 570, 572, 573 and 574 will be incorporated into one new student visa type. For the most up-to-date visa information, visit the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) website at [www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au).

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<th>APPENDIX 1: STUDY VISAS</th>
<th>SUBCLASS</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher education visa</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>Study a full-time higher education course, such as a Bachelor's degree, an Associate degree, or a masters by coursework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate research visa</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>Study a postgraduate degree, including a masters by research or doctoral (PhD) degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET sector visa</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>Study a VET course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and research visa</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>Participate in structured workplace-based training or in a professional development program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent ELICOS visa</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>Study a full-time English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-award sector visa</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>Study a foundational course or other non-award courses (or parts thereof).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools visa</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>Study a full-time primary or secondary school program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student guardian visa</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>Accompany an international student younger than 18 years who is studying in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special category visa</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>Available to New Zealand citizens to study and work in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence sector visa</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>International students sponsored by DFAT receive this visa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>APPENDIX 2: WORK VISAS</th>
<th>SUBCLASS</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary graduate visa – post-study stream</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>Allows international students, regardless of field of study, to stay and work in Australia for up to four years (provided they enrolled in their course after 5 November 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary graduate visa – graduate stream</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>Allows international students who enrolled prior to 5 November 2011 to stay and work in Australia for 18 months if they studied a qualification that leads to a profession listed on the Skilled Occupation List.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled independent visa</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Allows international students to transition to permanent residency, and therefore acquire permanent working rights (without requiring employer sponsorship). Visas are issued on a points-based system using the Skilled Occupation List.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled nominated visa</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Allows international students who have been nominated by a state government to transition to permanent residency (without requiring employer sponsorship). This visa is also issued on a points-based system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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