Graduated this year? What now?

So you've finished your final exams and perhaps after a well-deserved break, you might be thinking, what now? Fear not – whether you've graduated from school or university, the perfect time to figure out how to kick-start your career is now.

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- **Career plans.** Setting career goals early on is important to put you in good stead for the future. Even if you don't have big career dreams now, start with some short-term goals. Write up a list of things you want to achieve in the coming year, then break down each goal into detailed tasks to nut out what is actually required to achieve them.

- **Cover letters and resumes.** Before applying for any jobs, you'll need a well-crafted cover letter and resume that you can tweak to meet the requirements of each job you apply for. Read up on best practice when it comes to writing your resume, and find out what to include in your cover letter.

- **Applications.** Job applications should be about quality, not quantity. You'll have much more chance at landing a suitable job if you spend time reading the job description, researching more about the company, and tailoring your application to meet their requirements. The time spent on the application, no matter how long, will be evident to a prospective employer.

- **Recruiters.** Even though you may have little or no work experience, there are a number of recruitment agencies that specialise in the placement of graduates into full-time positions. Arrange to meet with these kinds of recruiters who can assess your skills and qualifications and help connect you to potential employers looking for new graduates. Commit to a good relationship with recruiters from the beginning, and you'll reap the benefits throughout your whole career.

- **Internships.** Many companies have regular internship programs, providing a range of

experiences in an industry and organisation. Internships can be a day a week, full-time, or for a few weeks over summer, and are a great way to gain insight into an industry. They're also a great way to work out what you're *not* interested in, which is just as important!

- **Volunteer.** While you're searching for jobs, volunteering is another great way to add experience to your resume while giving back to the community. It's an opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people at a time when your friends from school, college, or university may also be busy on their own job-seeking missions.

- **Networking.** Meeting new people can open doors for you and lead you to a job unexpectedly. Sign up to new graduate or industry events and get to know the people who could potentially become your colleagues. All you need here is a little confidence.