

PLANNING CAREER SNAPSHOT



Source: Job Outlook as of December 2020

Planning

The [planning](#) profession (also referred to as 'urban planning' or 'town planning') is a dynamic and diverse profession that is predominantly concerned with shaping cities, towns and regions, by addressing issues such as development, infrastructure and service provision. While planners may assess local development proposals they are also engaged in devising strategic policies, managing communities and guiding future developments. Planners work in areas as diverse as housing, energy, health, education, environmental management, communications, leisure, tourism and transport. Through a multidisciplinary perspective they assist to revitalise and create new public spaces, conserve heritage and actively enhance community value. Planners are gaining increasing recognition within the community for their vital role in imagining spaces that consider 'liveability', environmental

sustainability, social accessibility and aesthetic design. Decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders are also increasingly interested in how planners can assist in managing urban growth effectively to build a nation worth inheriting for future generations.

Planners are central within complex debates about the places in which we live, and specialise in areas that include:

- Urban development
- Regional and rural planning
- Development assessment and land use
- Social and community based planning
- Urban design and place-making
- Environmental planning and natural resources management
- Transport planning
- Heritage and conservation
- Neighbourhood and urban renewal
- Infrastructure and services planning
- International development

Based on the [Planning Institute of Australia](#) site.

Careers in Planning

There are many industries where planning skill sets are in demand. JCU Graduates may also be eligible for accreditation through the Planning Institute of Australia. Planning graduates have been employed as:

- Graduate Natural Resources Officer with Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Spatial Planning Officer with City of Townsville
- Parks Planning Officer with Mackay Regional Council
- Renewable Project Officer with Risen Energy
- Development Planner with Noosa Shire Council
- Urban Planner with RPS Group
- Senior Development Compliance Officer with City of Gold Coast

- Senior Planning Officer with State Development, Manufacturing and Planning

**Note: Accessed in December 2020. Not all of these positions will be available to graduates without prior experience or additional study or training.*

What are JCU Planning Graduates Doing?

The [JCU Alumni LinkedIn page](#) provides information on over 130 JCU alumni who have listed 'City/Urban, Community and Regional Planning' within their **LinkedIn profile**.

The top ten employers listed on these LinkedIn profiles are: Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (Qld), James Cook University, Townsville City Council, Urban Sync Pty Ltd, AECOM, Mackay Regional Council, Milford Planning, RPS Australia Asia Pacific, Department of Transport and Main Roads, Cardno.

The key technical skills listed are: Urban Planning, Research, Project Management, Project Planning, Sustainability, Strategic Planning, Land Use Planning, Sustainable Development, Local Government, Management and Environmental Planning. The key transferable skills listed are: Stakeholder Engagement, Customer Service, and Community Engagement. (Retrieved in February, 2019)

Investigate individual Alumni profiles to identify career paths, types of experience, skills and past employers.

Workplace Experience and Identifying Opportunities

Gaining **career relevant experience** can improve your job prospects, confidence and help you stand out against other applicants.

[Professional placements](#) are included in your course but you can further develop exposure to various natural environments, practice teamwork, communication, stakeholder management, negotiation, collaboration and project management skills through

volunteering for environmental protection organisations. Building on those experiences, you could source vacation work and internships. Ideally you would want to include at least one such extra-curricular skill development opportunity every semester.

It is of essence that you **keep a diary** of your experiences, record any key tasks and skills used to deliver those tasks, main challenges and how you tackled them, what you would do differently next time, any measurable results, how you liked the experience, your energy and engagement levels. These notes will help you choose the right career path and tell compelling stories about your competencies in your job applications and job interviews.

Keep **reviewing job descriptions** in areas of your interest and note the **technical skills** that you will need to develop to be considered for those positions. Some of them, if not covered in your course, could be acquired through a [MOOC](#) micro credential and further developed through application in volunteering and other workplace experiences.

Volunteering opportunities can be found:

- [JCU Careers and Employability](#)
- [Conservation Volunteers Australia](#)
- [Townsville Community Directory](#)
- [Cairns Community Directory](#)
- [FNQ Volunteers](#)
- [Volunteering North Queensland](#)
- [Seek Volunteer](#)

Vacation work and internships are advertised by organisations through their own websites, Graduate Recruitment Directories and online job boards.

Graduate Recruitment Directories

- [GradAustralia](#)
- [GradConnection](#)

Employer sites

- [Queensland Government](#)
- [Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy](#)
- [Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities](#)

For further ideas, access [the JCU Job Ready](#)

Enterprise and Innovation

Enterprising mindset is not limited to setting up and managing your own business. More importantly, it means seeing problems and difficulties as a challenge and an opportunity to generate and test ideas aimed at addressing the problem. This often leads to process improvements at work and developing new ways of delivering the service. Employers are usually highly impressed with evidence of enterprising qualities.

JCU offers a range of free online courses on entrepreneurship, for example. Small Business Secrets; Entrepreneurship Foundations; and many others on [LinkedIn Learning](#) that can be accessed for free from [JCU Library's website](#) (you would be required to create a free [LinkedIn](#) account).

[Student challenges and competitions](#) are a good way to show your enterprising mindset, develop your interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation skills and stand out in the eyes of the employers. For example you might like to review the competition called "**Ideas for Action**" listed on the above website.

Graduate Employment

Many large organisations, including those that offer vacation experience, run **Graduate Programs**.

These are paid structured professional development positions, where new hires are provided on the job training.

The organisations **recruit students at a specific time or throughout their final year of study** for start in the following year. Applications open as early as March so it is essential that you start preparing a year in advance.

Graduate programs are competitive so it is important to understand what is expected and work towards ensuring you have the skills, knowledge and experience required.

Please refer to the directories listed for vacation work and internships to identify graduate programs and organisations or identify graduate programs offered by the engineering firms listed in the directory below:

- [Directory of engineering consulting and construction companies](#)

Tap into **online forums** e.g.

[Glassdoor](#) and [Whirlpool Forum](#) to view discussions on employers and recruitment requirements.

Smaller planning consultancies and city councils offer a number of entry level positions with mentoring and specific responsibilities within the business advertised throughout the year on:

- [Planning Institute Australia Jobs](#)
- [Jobs In Planning](#)
- [Seek.com.au](#)

Opportunities can also be identified by contacting directly ("expression of interest") local businesses:

- [The Yellow Pages Townsville](#)
- [The Yellow Pages Cairns](#).

Professional Associations

Professional associations often offer student memberships at discounted rates. Many professional associations offer you access to mentoring, networking, career information and professional development. Membership indicates commitment to your future profession and ongoing professional development:

- [Planning Institute Australia](#)
- [Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand](#)