



CAREER BRIEF – STUDENT EXPERIENCE & CAMPUS OPERATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

What this role actually is

Student experience and campus operations roles support the day-to-day running of a higher education campus, without being academic or teaching roles.

These roles can involve student enquiries, enrolments, attendance concerns, events, welfare referrals, lecturer support, room readiness, timetabling, compliance processes, and making sure the campus works as expected.

Where this role typically works

These roles can be found in:

- Universities
- TAFE and vocational education providers
- Private higher education colleges
- ELICOS / English language schools
- Student guilds and student associations
- Student accommodation services
- Pathway colleges and international education providers

What the work involves: real tasks and realities

Typical work includes:

- Greeting and assisting students
- Answering student enquiries
- Helping with enrolment, class selection, attendance and academic progress questions
- Supporting students with welfare or personal issues
- Coordinating activities, events or student engagement programs
- Supporting lecturers with rooms, equipment, timetables and operational issues
- Managing competing student, staff and campus needs
- Escalating complex cases through policy and support pathways

Skills that matter in practice

Technical skills

- Student administration systems
- Enrolment and admissions processes
- Timetabling
- Policy and procedure interpretation
- Basic compliance awareness
- Understanding ESOS, CRICOS and student visa-related responsibilities where relevant
- Case notes and escalation processes
- Event and campus coordination

Transferable skills

- Customer service
- Clear communication
- Problem solving
- Team coordination
- Stakeholder management

- Prioritisation
- Conflict de-escalation
- Professional boundaries

Often underestimated skills

- Emotional steadiness
- Patience
- Empathy
- Knowing when to escalate
- Remaining calm when a student is distressed
- Managing a “friendly” environment without becoming personally over-involved

Pathways into the role

Typical pathways

Many people enter through:

- Student administration roles
- Reception or front-of-house campus roles
- Admissions assistant roles
- Student services officer roles
- Student engagement or events roles
- Accommodation support roles
- Student guild or association roles

Alternative pathways

People may also transfer in from:

- Customer service
- Events
- Hospitality
- Tourism
- Sales and marketing
- Community services
- Administration
- Youth work
- Case coordination
- Residential support or accommodation services

Labour market reality

Demand is **steady but uneven**, not a blanket shortage.

Australia’s Education and Training industry is a large employer. Jobs and Skills Australia reports **1,318,100 employed workers** in the industry and says it represents **8.9% of the Australian workforce**. Calculation: 8.9% is reported directly by Jobs and Skills Australia, not calculated independently here. ([Jobs and Skills Australia](#))

Student-facing higher education roles are shaped by enrolment numbers, international student settings, government funding, provider growth, restructures and student support obligations. International education remains a major driver, but recent numbers show volatility: Department of Education data reported **622,043 international students** studying in Australia year-to-date February 2026, down **7.7%** on the same period in 2025. ([Department of Education](#))

Opportunities are generally stronger where there are clusters of universities, TAFEs, private colleges and international education providers. Major cities and education hubs usually have more openings than smaller regional markets, though regional providers may have less applicant competition.

Constraints include fixed-term contracts, restructures, high-volume student periods, and roles being advertised with broad requirements. Entry-level roles can be competitive because they attract applicants from administration, education, customer service, student support and career-change backgrounds.

Career progression

Progression can move in several directions:

- Student Services Officer
- Student Experience Officer
- Senior Student Adviser
- Admissions Officer
- Student Engagement Coordinator
- Events or Activities Coordinator
- Student Welfare / Wellbeing support pathway
- Team Leader
- Campus Coordinator
- Assistant Campus Manager
- Campus Manager
- Operations Manager
- Compliance or quality assurance roles
- International student support roles
- Accommodation services roles

What people often get wrong

People often assume higher education work means teaching, lecturing or research.

They also underestimate how much operational and welfare work sits behind the student experience.

People may also assume the role is basic admin. In reality, the admin often connects to student progression, visa conditions, academic pathways, class capacity, welfare, complaints, attendance and regulatory obligations. Tiny cog, big machine.

This role may suit you if:

- You like helping students solve practical problems
- You can stay calm when people are stressed
- You enjoy variety and interruptions
- You are comfortable with policies and procedures
- You can work across students, lecturers, managers and admin teams
- You can balance warmth with professional boundaries
- You are interested in education but do not want to teach
- You can handle emotionally demanding conversations without taking everything home

This role may NOT suit you if:

- You want predictable, uninterrupted admin work
- You dislike emotional labour
- You get impatient with repeated questions

- You struggle with boundaries
- You avoid conflict or difficult conversations
- You dislike policy-heavy environments
- You do not like being the “middle person” between students, academics and management
- You need every day to follow a neat plan. It will not. The campus has other hobbies.

Sources and reliability

This brief is based on:

- Practitioner insights from Shane Taas’ podcast transcript, especially his experience across ELICOS, university accommodation, TAFE Queensland, student guild work, Griffith College and his current Assistant Campus Manager role.
- General labour market and career pathway information from Jobs and Skills Australia, the Australian Department of Education, and TEQSA. ([Jobs and Skills Australia](#))

Currency statement

Information is current as of **June 2026**.

Limitations

Role titles, duties and entry requirements vary by employer, location, provider type, student cohort, campus size and level of seniority.

A Student Experience Officer in a small private college may do very different work from a Student Services Adviser in a large university, even if the job title sounds similar.

Next steps for exploration

To explore this pathway, look at current job ads using terms such as:

- Student Experience Officer
- Student Services Officer
- Student Administration Officer
- Campus Coordinator
- Admissions Officer
- Student Engagement Coordinator
- Student Wellbeing Officer
- International Student Support Officer
- Campus Operations Coordinator

Also compare ads from universities, TAFEs, private colleges and student associations. The wording will show whether the role is mostly admin, welfare, events, admissions, compliance or operations.

More career exploration resources at curatedcareers.com.au

