



Guide to Cadetships for University Students

Step-by-Step

*This document should be read in conjunction with the
"Guide to Cadetships – Purpose & Explanation" document.*

Once you decide to offer a Cadetship, ensure there is sufficient money in the budget.
This will be a recurring expenditure.

Contact the Universities in your State and discuss the proposed cadetship with the
Head of Civil Engineering. The University can assist in identifying
if there is a student from your area, or any other specific type of student you would prefer.

Discuss with the University the desirability/possibility of cadet studying part-time
(thus working one or two days a week).

Consider advertising in the local press stating terms of the Cadetship, closing date for
applications, etc. Consider advertising on University notice boards.

Consider legal advice about the form of contract that should be drawn up,
with particular attention to the bond conditions.

Arrange for assessment of applications and subsequent interviews.

Arrange for a suitable occasion to award the Cadetship.
Invite family and close friends of cadet, CEO, Senior Staff, Mentor,
future work colleagues (graduates), University representatives, IPWEA representative, etc.

Appoint mentor and ensure mentor and Cadet are aware of the requirements of the mentor
program. If necessary, send the mentor to a mentor training course.

Consider how payment will be made to the Cadet. It may be beneficial to make
regular payments rather than one large annual payment.

Offer the Cadet Student Membership of IPWEA.

Plan ahead for University vacation time when the cadet will do work experience with you.
Plan projects that coincide with the cadet's interests.
Consult with the cadet's lecturers at University to plan final year project.



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(Full-time & Part-time Study) (Local Government & Public Works)

Many public works organisations have experienced difficulty in attracting and recruiting young people. One possible way is through the re-introduction of a Cadetship program.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for local government and public works organisations to offer Engineering Cadetships to students studying a Bachelor of Engineering degree.

Refer also to the *Guide to Cadetships* in conjunction with this document. At a later date, a skeleton document may be prepared outlining the type of contract (or agreement) that could be drawn up to offer/accept a cadetship.

Most Bachelor of Engineering courses in Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering are four years in duration, but if the student elects to do a double degree, the course length is five years.

The vast majority of students elect to undertake full-time study, thereby completing the course in minimum time, but a few students take a lesser study load during some or all of their course to enable them to work part-time. A full-time study load will require the student to attend approximately 20-25 hours per week at the university, and at least an equal number of additional hours doing assignments, etc.

A very large percentage of students seek low paid casual (evening) work out of economic necessity. Because of the high study load demanded by the engineering course, and the students' casual work commitments, many fail units during their course and have to repeat them, adding to the length of time (and HECS debt) spent at university.

About 13,000 domestic students commence engineering degree studies each year, but less than 8,000 graduate¹. The attrition rate is always much higher in the first year of study and declines as each year continues. Students entering their final year are well motivated and have a very high rate of success.

In their annual salary survey Engineers Australia stated 'Across the majority of states, Civil Engineers are reported to be the most sought after'². There is also

widespread anecdotal evidence of the skills shortage for civil engineers and the difficulty in attracting new graduates into the local government engineering profession.

One of the tools to attract young people into local government engineering is to offer a cadetship.

How a Cadetship Works

If a local government organisation decides it wants to secure the services of a graduate engineer sometime in the future, then a cadetship might provide a good opportunity.

First, you will need to advertise with the university of your choice. Then, carefully select the right candidate.

The local government organisation will be expected to pay the Cadet's HECS fees and a weekly amount called a 'sustenance allowance'. In some cases a 'living away from home' allowance may also be payable. In addition, the organisation will offer paid work experience during the long university vacation and appoint a mentor for the cadet.

On successful completion of the engineering degree course, the organisation will expect the cadet to work for them as a graduate engineer under the terms and conditions of a bond. The bond is a legal contract between the organisation and the cadet, and it would be best to get this drawn up by the organisation's legal representative. The bond document will lay out all terms and conditions of the cadetship and cover such areas as leave entitlements, resignation by the cadet, academic failure by the cadet, etc.

Benefits for Regional Australia

Students living in regional Australia face particular financial difficulties in attending university in metropolitan areas. The cost of living away from home is not insignificant. Cadetships offered to rural students, even in their first year at university, can be very beneficial and are one way of retaining young people in the area of their upbringing.

It is known that at least one university actively encourages cadetships for indigenous students.



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When to Commence a Cadetship

In the introduction, attention was drawn to the large number of students who withdraw from engineering courses. The national average attrition rate is over 22% in the first year and somewhat less than half that during the remaining three years.

The cost of providing a cadetship is not inconsiderable – about \$20,000 per year (see the figures in the *Guide to Cadetships* information sheet). Many organisations look at the overall cost and, after taking into consideration the average attrition rate, offer cadetships only in the final one or two years of a student's course.

There are benefits for both sides in waiting to offer a cadetship until later in the course :

For the employer

- Student is aware of interests and possible career direction after second or third year of study
- Better prospect of engaging a student with good chance of qualifying
- Less costly if granted in fourth year.

For the student

- Much better idea of desired career direction
- Bond length not so long (much more attractive to Generation Y students)
- Financial security at the most critical time of the course.

Part-time Study

Most students will wish to pursue their course of study at university as quickly as possible and, once a cadetship is offered, will opt for full-time study. There may, however, be some situations where a student will wish to study part-time. Universities place some conditions on part-time study and a course must be completed within a specified time of commencement. (International students are required to study full-time).

It is possible to offer a cadetship to part-time students, but each case needs to be treated differently. Frequently an agreed number of days/hours per week will be worked by the cadet, and the amount of sustenance allowance reduced, or cancelled

altogether. In such circumstances, it may be possible to waive the bond conditions.

Cadetships Versus Scholarships

A scholarship is where an organisation gives an amount of money to a student each year. Normally few, if any, ties are made on the student.

Paid work experience is provided at the end of each year, and the student is offered guaranteed employment with the organisation upon graduation, but this is not a condition of the scholarship. Students see scholarships as much preferable to cadetships, particularly as the bond conditions do not apply.

For organisations, however, the cost is not as great (maybe less than 50% of the cost of a cadetship), but the risk that the graduate may look elsewhere for employment is high. Some companies report that they regularly offer scholarships, and have a high success rate in retaining the scholar in their workforce after graduation. It seems that the secret for those companies is the provision of interesting projects during work experience times and a mentor to keep in regular touch with the scholar.

Conclusion

Cadetships are of immense value to the employer as they 'bond' the graduate to work for the organisation for a set time or an agreed number of years. In practice, many Generation Y young people do not wish to be tied to the terms and conditions imposed by a cadetship.

References

- 1 The Engineering Profession – A Statistical Overview (Fourth Edition, March 2006) - Engineers Australia
- 2 Engineers Australia Salary and Benefits Survey, Page 36 – published by Engineers Media, February 2006