



Careers News - News, Resources and Events

December 1, 2025

Events

[Victoria University Tourism, Events, Hospitality & Culinary Information Session](#)

Organisation: Victoria University

Location: Victoria University, Footscray Nicholson Campus

Date: December 1, 2025

Start your career in tourism, events, hospitality and culinary professions. Prepare to join one of the world's largest and most dynamic industries.

Our courses are delivered by expert teachers who will teach you to put specialised theory into practice.

Find out about the course structure and information for:

- [Diploma of Travel and Tourism Management SIT50122](#)
- [Diploma of Hospitality Management SIT50422](#)
- [Certificate III in Commercial Cookery SIT30821](#)
- [Certificate IV in Kitchen Management SIT40521](#)
- [Diploma of Hospitality Management SIT50422](#)
- [Certificate III in Patisserie SIT31021](#)
- [Diploma of Event Management SIT50322](#)

The sessions will cover:

- industry connections
- placement opportunities
- pathways to further study
- facilities for your study, including a tour.

[Find out more](#)

[Social Media Age Restrictions Explained – A Webinar for Parents and Carers from the eSafety Commissioner](#)

Organisation: eSafety Commissioner

Location: Online

Date: December 2, 2025

From 10 December 2025, certain social media platforms won't be allowed to let Australian children under 16 create or keep an account. Join our information session to understand the changes. This 30-minute webinar will help parents and carers understand the upcoming changes to social media access for children under 16.

Join our information session to:

- understand the purpose of the new age restrictions and how they aim to protect young Australians
- understand which platforms will require users to be 16+ and what platforms they can still access
- get tips and resources to support your child's online safety and wellbeing through the transition.
- gain a clear understanding of the new rules and their implications
- gain confidence in guiding their child through these changes
- access to trusted resources to support safe and positive online engagement.

This webinar is offered more than once, so you can select the date and time that works best for you.

[Find out more](#)

[Myths and Facts for Christmas Casuals – Webinar with the Fair Work Ombudsman](#)

Organisation: Fair Work Ombudsman

Location: Online

Date: December 2, 2025

Should you be paid for coming in early? Do breakages come out of your pay? Is an online induction work time? We sort fact from fiction in this short webinar for people picking up casual work this holiday season.

A recording of this webinar will be made available to everyone who registers for the session.

[Find out more](#)

[Victoria University Remedial Massage Information Session](#)

Organisation: Victoria University

Location: Victoria University Remedial Massage Clinic, Whitten Oval

Date: December 3, 2025

Join us for a Wednesday information session to learn about studying remedial massage at Victoria University (VU) and receive a complimentary massage.

The sessions will cover:

- the course structure and information
- industry connections
- placement opportunities
- pathways to further study.

You will also gain access to VU clinic services, current students and trainers.

[Find out more](#)

[Victoria University Webinar for Parents of High School Students](#)

Organisation: Victoria University

Location: Online

Date: December 4, 2025

We know this is a busy time of year for you and your students – and for the parents and carers supporting them too. To make things a little easier, we're inviting parents to join our Parents Webinar.

In this free online session, we'll unpack:

- How ATAR works and what it really means
- How to support students once results are released
- How to navigate Change of Preference and enrolment processes
- The ways VU supports students as they transition into tertiary study

Our Student Recruitment team will also be available to answer questions live.

[Find out more](#)

[Chisholm Institute Campus Tours for Future Students – December](#)

Organisation: Chisholm Institute

Location: Chisholm Berwick, Frankston & Dandenong Campuses

Date: December 4, 2025

Join us for a campus tour and see Chisholm up close. You'll be able to walk through our facilities, guided by a Chisholm representative who can answer your questions about campus life, career pathways and our range of courses.

Register for a campus tour so you can:

- See our facilities
- Learn about our range of courses and the career pathways available
- Find out if a course at Chisholm is right for you

[Find out more](#)

[AIE Online Campus Day](#)

Organisation: Academy of Interactive Entertainment

Location: Online

Date: December 6, 2025

Discover the courses designed to get you started in game development, 3D animation, film and visual effects at the AIE Online Campus Day. AIE will be running this event for students interested in studying online. You will be able to meet our teachers, explore how classes will run, course options, career pathways and see our amazing student work.

We will be covering everything you need to know about the:

- careers in games and VFX that we train students for;
- studios and industries that we work with;
- courses we offer - from beginners to professional mastery, and;
- the software, skills and knowledge we teach.

[Find out more](#)

[National Fashion College Open Day, Melbourne](#)

Organisation: National Fashion College

Location: National Fashion College, Melbourne Campus

Date: December 6, 2025

Unlock a world of limitless possibilities at National Fashion College, where your fashion journey begins at our iconic Melbourne Campus! Step into a realm of unmatched creativity and immerse yourself in the forefront of fashion innovation. Our pioneering courses, dynamic internship opportunities, and exclusive access to the buzz of Australian, New York, and London Fashion Weeks will propel you into the heart of the global fashion scene. Get ready to be inspired, challenged, and transformed - we can't wait to welcome you!

If these times don't suit you, you can always [book in for a private appointment or tour instead](#).

[Find out more](#)

[Make a Short Film in a Day! Workshop for Students in Years 10-12 in Melbourne](#)

Organisation: Very Short Film Festival

Location: SAE University College, Melbourne Campus

Date: December 6, 2025

At the Very Short Film Festival (VSFF), we're passionate about nurturing creativity and providing opportunities that go beyond the competition itself. From mentoring and inspiration to education and community engagement, we're building pathways for emerging storytellers to develop their craft and confidence.

We're excited to announce a brand-new opportunity for high school students — a one-day filmmaking experience presented by the VSFF in partnership with SAE University College.

On Saturday 6 December, students will step into SAE's state-of-the-art studios to plan, shoot and edit a micro short film — all in one day. Guided by SAE's expert film lecturers, participants will gain hands-on experience in real production environments.

It's free, fully hands-on, and includes lunch — but with only 20 spots per campus, places are limited, so register now and join us for a full day of creativity, collaboration and fun.

[Find out more](#)

[VTAC Webinar on Getting Your Results and What Happens Next for Students Starting in 2026](#)

Organisation: Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

Location: Online

Date: December 9, 2025

You're about to receive your secondary school results, but what do you need to do to prepare for the next stage of your education journey? Join us to hear more about how the ATAR is calculated, advice on changing your preferences and how to order them, accepting an offer and other ways you can get support in this important time.

[Find out more](#)

[Victoria University Remedial Massage Information Session](#)

Organisation: Victoria University

Location: Victoria University Remedial Massage Clinic, Whitten Oval

Date: December 10, 2025

Join us for a Wednesday information session to learn about studying remedial massage at Victoria University (VU) and receive a complimentary massage.

The sessions will cover:

- the course structure and information
- industry connections
- placement opportunities
- pathways to further study.

You will also gain access to VU clinic services, current students and trainers.

[Find out more](#)

[Endota Wellness College Open Evening for Future Students](#)

Organisation: endota Wellness College

Location: endota Wellness College

Date: December 11, 2025

eWC invites you to come to Open Evening December 2025. Learn how we get our students job-ready within Australia's largest spa network. Discover where the beauty and wellness industry can take you, chat with the team, enjoy and interactive masterclass, have your questions answered and follow your calling in Beauty Therapy.

What's Happening:

- Hear from our CEO, Helen Robb-Lacey & and student liaison team
- Learn about the booming beauty & wellness industry and job opportunities
- Take a tour around our spa-like campus
- Enjoy and interactive masterclass
- Enjoy nourishing nibbles and refreshments
- Complimentary gift for all attendees!

[Find out more](#)

[La Trobe University Change of Preference Fest for Future Students](#)

Organisation: La Trobe University

Location: La Trobe University, Melbourne (Bundoora) Campus

Date: December 11, 2025

We know getting your ATAR results can be a big moment, so we're hosting the Change of Preference Fest to give you the support and advice you need, no matter what your results are. Chat with our course advisors about your options and explore alternative pathways if your results aren't what you expected. We'll help you figure out what's best for you.

Here's what you can expect:

- Course advice and pathways
- Campus tours
- Free food
- Prizes and giveaways

Whether you're thrilled with your results or need a bit of guidance, we've got your back. This is your chance to get all the info you need to make the best decision for your future.

[Find out more](#)

[Australian Catholic University – Change of Preference Guided Campus Tours, Melbourne](#)

Organisation: Australian Catholic University

Location: Australian Catholic University, Melbourne Campus

Date: December 11 to December 12, 2025

Attend a guided campus tour to explore what ACU has to offer, discuss your study options and pathways into ACU, and get personalised change of preference advice.

General guided tours typically last 30 to 60 minutes. Registrations are essential as places fill quickly.

[Find out more](#)

UniMelb Change of Preference Expo for School Leavers

Organisation: University of Melbourne

Location: University of Melbourne, Parkville Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Locking in your university preferences? Chat in person with our staff and students about your ATAR results, course options and what it's like to study at Melbourne.

At the expo, you can:

- Attend information sessions and campus tours
- Chat to our Future Students team about the Melbourne curriculum, pathways to graduate study, course information and entry requirements
- Meet with faculty representatives to learn about course structures, majors and much more
- Learn about Access Melbourne benefits including ATAR entry requirements, Graduate Degree Packages and scholarships
- Meet with representatives from University Accommodation and residential college teams to discover student accommodation options
- Find out about the range of overseas study programs and partner institutions
- Discover sporting clubs, programs, and fitness services that cater to the first-timer through to the elite athletes.

[Find out more](#)

Swinburne Change of Preference Expo for School Leavers

Organisation: Swinburne University of Technology

Location: Swinburne University, Hawthorn Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Change of Preference Expo is your chance to access personalised support from VTAC experts, learn how to maximise your chances of an offer, and get help adjusting your preferences on the spot.

Here's what else you can expect:

- one-on-one career planning tailored to your goals
- free food, coffee and live music
- guided campus tours for different study areas, including the Bloomberg Trading Lab, KordaMentha Financial Crime Lab, and new screen production facilities.

[Find out more](#)

RMIT Change of Preference Event for School Leavers

Organisation: RMIT University

Location: RMIT University, City Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Support and advice await at the RMIT's Change of Preference Event, where you can sit down with a student advisor, and get in-person help with everything that comes after high school exams.

There's more than one way into university and this event is the best place to find the option that feels right for you.

Whether you're a Year 12 or a parent of a Year 12, join us for 1-on-1 advice about preferences, pathway options and alternative courses. Discover all you need to know about RMIT and chat with staff who can help with your unique circumstances.

[Find out more](#)

[Federation Study Expo for School Leavers, Berwick](#)

Organisation: Federation University

Location: Federation University, Berwick Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Looking into further study? Get the advice you need at our Berwick Study Expo.

Study Expo is a great opportunity to visit your future campus and discuss your study plans with an experienced advisor before making your final decision. This event takes place on our Berwick campus, giving you the chance to explore the location that suits you best. You can also find out about our wide range of pathway options, scholarships and flexible online and part-time study options.

[Find out more](#)

[Federation Study Expo for School Leavers, Gippsland](#)

Organisation: Federation University

Location: Federation University, Gippsland Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Looking into further study? Get the advice you need at our Gippsland Study Expo.

Study Expo is a great opportunity to visit your future campus and discuss your study plans with an experienced advisor before making your final decision. This event takes place on our Gippsland campus, giving you the chance to explore the location that suits you best.

You can also find out about our wide range of pathway options, scholarships and flexible online and part-time study options.

[Find out more](#)

[Monash Change Day for School Leavers](#)

Organisation: Monash University

Location: Monash University, Clayton Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Once you receive your results, you may have questions about what to do next. Monash Change Day is the place to get all the answers. From finding out how to change your VTAC course preferences to exploring study options based on your ATAR score, our course advisers will be on hand to guide you.

You'll have the chance to explore our ten study areas, attend information sessions, take a facility tour, plus discover our range of pathway options and student support services, so you'll have all the answers you need to plan your future – all under one roof.

[Find out more](#)

[Deakin Change of Preference Event for School Leavers, Geelong Waterfront](#)

Organisation: Deakin University

Location: Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Feeling unsure about your preferences? You don't have to do it alone. Visit Deakin on campus Friday 12 December to get expert course advice and dedicated pathway support.

[Find out more](#)

[Deakin Change of Preference Event for School Leavers, Geelong Waurin Ponds](#)

Organisation: Deakin University

Location: Deakin University, Geelong Waurin Ponds Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Feeling unsure about your preferences? You don't have to do it alone. Visit Deakin on campus Friday 12 December to get expert course advice and dedicated pathway support.

[Find out more](#)

Deakin Change of Preference Event for School Leavers, Melbourne

Organisation: Deakin University

Location: Deakin University, Melbourne Burwood Campus

Date: December 12, 2025

Feeling unsure about your preferences? You don't have to do it alone. Visit Deakin on campus Friday 12 December to get expert course advice and dedicated pathway support.

[Find out more](#)

Discover the Path to Becoming Cabin Crew: Free Online Info Session

Organisation: Aviation Australia

Location: Online

Date: December 17, 2025

Are you curious about what it takes to work as cabin crew or flight attendant? Our 45-minute online information session (plus 15 minutes Q&A) will give you insider insight into the world of cabin crew, the training process, and how our course at Aviation Australia can set you up for success.

By the end of this session, you will:

- Understand the full structure of the Aviation Australia Cabin Crew Essential Course, and how it differs from other training options
- Learn the skills and certifications you will gain (e.g. first aid, customer service, emergency procedures)
- See real classroom and simulation facilities, and hear from instructors with industry experience
- Explore potential career pathways with major airlines
- Get your questions answered live during our Q&A

Who should attend?

- Aspiring cabin crew candidates aged 18+
- Recent school leavers looking for a unique career path
- Individuals wanting to pivot into aviation or customer service roles
- Anyone who wants a realistic view of what it takes to become cabin crew
- Anyone who wants to learn about our graduate outcomes

Whether you're just exploring or ready to commit, this session is your opportunity to see if cabin crew training is for you.

[Find out more](#)

Scholarships

University of Melbourne Dylan Alcott Foundation Scholarship

Organisation: University of Melbourne

Location: Australia

Value: 50% fee remission and up to AU\$30,000

Open Date: November 12, 2025

Close Date: January 12, 2026

[Find out more](#)

Griffith Brighter Futures Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students

Organisation: Griffith University

Location: Australia

Value: Up to AU\$40,000

Close Date: December 22, 2025

[Find out more](#)

Competitions

Local Lens: A Photo Essay Contest for Exploring the Place Where You Live

Organisation: The New York Times

Location: All

Value: See details

Close Date: January 14, 2026

[Find out more](#)

Young Reporters for the Environment International Competition

Organisation: Foundation for Environmental Education

Location: All

Value: See details

Close Date: June 1, 2026

[Find out more](#)

Weekly Posts - Pay & Conditions

What's the difference between casual, part-time, and full-time work?

Understanding the difference between casual, part-time, and full-time employment matters because each type comes with different entitlements, expectations, and levels of job security. The distinction affects everything from how much you're paid per hour to whether you get sick leave, and it's worth knowing what you're signing up for before you accept a job offer.

Full-time employment

Full-time employees typically work 38 hours per week, though this can vary slightly depending on the industry award or enterprise agreement. You'll have set hours and days, receive paid annual leave (usually four weeks per year), paid sick and carer's leave (typically ten days per year), and other entitlements like long service leave if you stay with the employer long enough.

Full-time employees also have greater job security. Your employer can't just decide to give you fewer hours next week, and if they want to let you go, they need to provide notice (or pay you instead of working that notice period). The notice period depends on how long you've worked there, ranging from one week for less than a year of service to four weeks if you've been there for more than five years.

The trade-off is less flexibility. You can't generally decide to take a week off whenever you feel like it, and you're expected to be available during standard business hours. Your hourly rate will be lower than casual rates because your pay includes the value of your leave entitlements built in.

Part-time employment

Part-time employees work regular hours each week, but fewer than full-time (anything under 38 hours). You might work three days a week, or five shorter days – the key feature is that your hours are regular and predictable. You receive all the same entitlements as full-time employees, just calculated on a [pro-rata basis](#).

For example, if you work three days a week (roughly 60% of full-time hours), you'd receive 60% of the annual leave and sick leave entitlements that a full-time employee gets. You'd accrue 2.4 weeks of annual leave per year instead of four weeks. Your hourly rate is the same as a full-time employee doing the same work, and you receive the same protections around notice periods and job security.

Part-time work offers a middle ground between the security of full-time employment and the flexibility many people need. It's popular with students, parents, and people managing other commitments, because you have guaranteed hours and entitlements without being locked into full-time availability.

Casual employment

Casual employees don't have guaranteed hours and can generally have their shifts changed or cancelled without much notice. In exchange for this lack of security and the absence of paid leave, you receive casual loading – typically an extra 25% on top of the base hourly rate. This means if a permanent employee earns \$20 per hour, you'd earn \$25 per hour for doing the same work. That extra \$5 is meant to compensate you for not getting paid annual leave or sick leave, and for the uncertainty of not knowing how many hours you'll work next week. Casual employment offers maximum flexibility. If you're offered shifts you can't work, you can generally say no without consequence (though consistently refusing shifts might mean you're offered fewer in future). This flexibility makes casual work popular with students who need to prioritise study during exam periods, or people juggling multiple jobs. The downside is the lack of security and predictability. You might work 30 hours one week and five hours the next, which makes budgeting difficult. If you're sick, you don't get paid. If the business is quiet, your hours might be cut. And your employer can end your employment without notice at any time.

From casual to permanent

If you've been working as a casual employee on a regular pattern of hours for 12 months, you might have the right to request [conversion to permanent employment](#) (either part-time or full-time, depending on your hours). Your employer can only refuse this request on specific reasonable grounds.

Whether conversion is a good idea depends on your circumstances - you'll lose the casual loading when you convert, but you'll gain paid leave and job security. For some people, the security and leave entitlements are worth more than the higher casual rate. For others, particularly students who need flexibility, staying casual makes more sense.

Which type is best?

There's no universal answer. Full-time employment offers the most security and best benefits, but requires the greatest commitment. Casual work offers flexibility and higher hourly rates, but comes with uncertainty. Part-time work sits in the middle, offering security with some flexibility.

Your choice depends on your life stage and priorities. If you're studying full-time, casual work might make sense because you can refuse shifts during exam periods. If you need stable income to pay rent, part-time or full-time work with guaranteed hours might be essential. If you're building a career in a field, full-time employment usually offers better opportunities for advancement and professional development.

Whatever type of employment you accept, make sure you understand your entitlements and that your employer is meeting their obligations. Check your payslips to ensure you're being paid correctly for your employment type, and don't hesitate to seek advice from the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) in Australia or [Employment NZ](#) in Aotearoa New Zealand if something doesn't seem right.

Still curious? [Read more about the world of work on our website here.](#)

Resumes & CVs

What happens when an employer checks your references?

When you apply for a job, you'll usually need to provide [references](#) – people who can vouch for your skills, work ethic, and character. Reference checking is when a potential employer contacts these people to verify what you've told them and get an honest assessment of what you're like to work with. Understanding how this process works helps you choose the right references and prepare them properly.

In this blog, we'll explain how employers use references as part of the hiring process and provide some tips on adding them to your resume.

Who should you add as a reference?

Most employers ask for two or three references. These might be previous managers, supervisors, teachers, coaches, or people you've volunteered with. The key is that they need to know you well enough in a "professional capacity" to speak meaningfully about your abilities and character. Your best friend's mum doesn't count as a professional reference unfortunately (even if she thinks you're lovely).

When do employers actually check?

Reference checks typically happen after you've been interviewed and the employer is seriously considering offering you the job. They're usually one of the final steps before making a formal offer. Some employers check references for all shortlisted candidates, while others only check for the person they intend to hire.

This is why your resume should say "references available upon request" rather than listing them directly. You don't want random people contacting your current boss before you've even had an interview. When an employer asks for your references, that's usually a good sign – it means they're interested enough to take the next step.

What questions do they ask?

Reference checks usually cover the basics first: confirming you actually worked there, what your job title was, and the dates of your employment. Then they'll ask about your performance, reliability, strengths and weaknesses, and whether the person would hire you again.

Common questions include things like:

- "How would you describe their work ethic?"
- "Can you give me an example of how they handled a difficult situation?"
- "What are their key strengths?"
- "Is there anything they could improve?"
- "They mentioned [skill] on their resume - can you give me an example of a time they demonstrated this skill?"

The reference check might happen over the phone or video call, via email, or occasionally through an online form. Phone and video calls allow for more detailed conversation and follow-up questions, which is why many employers prefer this method for important positions.

Choosing the right references

Pick people who can speak positively and specifically about your work or capabilities. A manager who supervised you directly for six months is more valuable than a senior executive you barely interacted with. If you haven't had a formal job yet, teachers who know your work well, coaches who've seen your commitment, or people you've volunteered with can all be appropriate references.

Think about what the job requires and choose references who can speak to those skills. If you're applying for a customer service role, someone who can talk about your communication skills and patience is more useful than someone who only knows you from behind-the-scenes work.

Avoid using family members or friends as references – even if you've done paid work for a relative, employers view these references as biased. Similarly, don't use people you've only worked with briefly or who barely remember you.

Preparing your references

If you're on the hunt for a job, make sure you prepare your references by following these steps before you apply:

Always ask before listing someone as a reference

This is both polite and practical – you want to make sure they're comfortable providing a reference and will say positive things about you. If someone seems hesitant when you ask, thank them and find someone else.

Give them details of the job

If they agree, let them know what kind of job you're applying for and what skills or qualities might be particularly relevant to highlight. You could say something like, "I'm applying for a retail position where customer service and reliability are really important. Would you be comfortable talking about those aspects of my work?"

Let them know once you apply

Give your references a heads-up when you've actually provided their details to an employer. Send them a quick message saying, "I've just applied for a position at [company] and listed you as a reference, so they might contact you in the next week or two. The role focuses on teamwork and problem-solving, which I know we worked on together. Thanks so much for being willing to support my application."

What if you don't have professional references?

If you're applying for your first job and genuinely don't have work experience or volunteer experience to draw on, it's acceptable to use teachers, sports coaches, or other adults who know you in a structured setting. A teacher who can speak to your reliability, communication skills, and ability to meet deadlines is better than no reference at all. Employers understand that young people or career changers might not have traditional references available. If this is your situation, you might include a note in your application explaining your circumstances: "As I'm currently completing school and applying for my first job, my references are teachers who can speak to my work ethic, reliability, and interpersonal skills."

What if your reference isn't great?

Most reference checks are positive – people generally agree to be references because they're happy to support you. But if you're concerned about what a previous employer might say, you have a few options.

You could use a co-worker or team leader instead of the manager if you left on difficult terms, though be prepared to explain this choice if asked. You could also be upfront in your interview about why you're not using a particular employer as a reference, briefly explaining the situation without being negative.

If you're genuinely worried that a past employer will provide an untrue or unfairly negative reference, you might want to seek advice from a community legal centre about your options. In some circumstances, [providing a misleading or vindictive reference can have legal implications for the referee](#).

It's also against the law for an employer to not hire you on the basis of your gender, age, race, religion, or other "protected attribute" in Australia - [read more about this on the Fair Work Ombudsman's website](#).

Health & Wellbeing

What happens to us when we finish something hard

You've just finished your exams or completed a major assignment, and you expected to feel relieved or happy...but instead, you feel oddly flat, maybe even a bit anxious or sad. Perhaps you're more tired than you've ever been, or you're struggling to motivate yourself to do anything at all. If this sounds familiar, you're experiencing something that's both common and surprisingly well understood by science.

The overwhelming feelings that often follow major achievements or the end of stressful periods aren't a sign that something is wrong with you. They're actually a predictable physiological and psychological response to what your body and brain have been through. Understanding what's happening can help you make sense of these feelings and respond to them more effectively.

Your stress system has been running on overdrive

When you're working towards exams or any other significant challenge, your body activates its [stress response system](#). This involves releasing hormones like cortisol and adrenaline that help you stay alert, focused, and able to push through difficulties. In short bursts, this system is incredibly useful - it helps you meet deadlines, concentrate during exams, and keep going when you're tired.

However, when this system runs for extended periods, your body essentially operates in a heightened state of arousal. You might not consciously feel stressed all the time, but your nervous system is working harder than usual to keep you functioning at this level. This is manageable whilst you're focused on the goal, but once that goal is achieved and the pressure drops, your body needs to recover.

The problem is that you can't just switch off this response immediately. Stress hormones take time to return to normal levels, and during this transition period you might experience symptoms like fatigue, emotional sensitivity, difficulty concentrating, or even physical symptoms like headaches or digestive problems.

Your brain needs to reorient itself

For weeks or months, your brain has had a clear structure and purpose. You knew what you needed to do each day, what you were working towards, and how to measure progress. This clarity, even though it was stressful, provided a framework for your daily life. When exams end, that framework suddenly disappears.

Research in neuroscience shows that [our brains really don't like uncertainty](#). We're wired to seek patterns and predictability because it helps us feel safe and in control. When a major structure in your life suddenly disappears, your brain has to recalibrate and work out what comes next. This process of reorientation takes mental energy and can manifest as feelings of being lost, anxious about the future, or unmotivated.

This is why many people experience what psychologists call the "post-achievement blues" or "arrival fallacy" – the unexpected low that comes after reaching a goal you've been working towards for a long time.

The contrast effect is real

During intense periods like exam preparation, you're often running on adrenaline and determination. You might have been sleeping less, eating irregularly, and pushing through fatigue because you had to. Your body was essentially masking some of the effects of this stress to help you get through. Once the pressure is off, your body stops masking these effects, and you suddenly become aware of just how tired you actually are. This is sometimes called the "let-down effect" – the moment when you finally have permission to rest, your body essentially presents you with the bill for everything you've put it through. Additionally, you might have been telling yourself, "I'll feel better once exams are over," which sets up an expectation that finishing will immediately make everything feel great. When the reality doesn't match this expectation, the contrast can make you feel even worse.

What this means for you

Understanding that these overwhelming feelings are a normal physiological response rather than a personal failing is important. It means you can approach recovery with more patience and self-compassion. Your nervous system needs time to recalibrate, your stress hormones need time to return to baseline, and your brain needs time to establish new routines and purposes. If you're feeling unexpectedly overwhelmed after finishing something hard, remember that this is your body and brain doing exactly what they're supposed to do. They're processing what you've been through and working on recovery. The best thing you can do is give them the time and conditions they need to complete this process, rather than trying to push through to the next thing immediately. If feelings of being overwhelmed persist for more than a few weeks, or if they're significantly affecting your daily functioning, it's worth talking to someone like a GP or counsellor. Services like [Headspace](#) offer support for young people managing stress and mental health concerns.

[You can also find more health and wellbeing resources on our website here.](#)