

What's more important to employers - education or experience?

It's a question that everyone faces when they're considering making a career move: what's more important to employers – education or experience?

Consider the following scenario: Person A has a university degree and Person B has 10 years of industry experience. Person A has formal training and is likely up to date on all the current programs and processes of the industry they studied. Person B, however, has lived experience in the industry, which has probably enabled them to develop their own innovative processes and techniques.

Both offer valuable benefits to businesses, which means there's no definitive winner between education and experience.

- **It depends on a range of circumstances**

“Every organisation is different, as is every hiring manager within that organisation – and hiring decisions absolutely come down to a range of circumstances,” explains Mhairi Kerr, Senior Manager at Six Degrees Executive.

“Hiring managers that are too rigid on candidates having qualifications can often miss out on exceptional talent who bring a wealth of hands-on experience that's often more valuable.”

On the other hand, hirers that overlook candidates who have recently graduated (in favour of those with more industry experience) can miss out on the up-to-date knowledge of the industry and innovations in research and best practices that new graduates can offer.

As Kerr says, “Often real-world, practical experience and the skills that education can't teach end up taking priority over education.”

- **Experience and education go hand-in-hand**

Candidates should be looking to build skills in any areas they might be lacking, in order to round out their resumes and progress in their career. You can be working at an organisation and wanting to move up to a more senior role, but find you're not able to due to the specific educational background that's required. Having a combination of both education and experience not only helps you stand out from the crowd, but makes it easier to secure the role you want.

- **It's never been a better time to study**

Fortunately, with the huge range of online and part-time courses available, it's never been more convenient to [study](#) and progress your career. Online study provides a range of opportunities to candidates seeking to grow their knowledge and their options. Kerr says, "With the increasing popularity of online courses, there are no longer any barriers to further developing education or knowledge."

If you're faced with the double-edged sword of needing experience but struggling to secure a role due to lack of experience, [volunteering](#) is a great way to get your foot in the door. It might not entirely match more senior workers' experience levels, but it can make a great start and boost your confidence as well as your skill set.

So, what's the verdict? Both education and experience play a pivotal role for employers to varying degrees. What's important is that you're communicating both in your resume and your [SEEK Profile](#).