



**/Grad.Girls**

**2026  
PROGRAM  
HANDBOOK**



**<WOMEN.4/STEM>**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

Welcome to the 2026 Grad Girls Sydney Program. We are delighted to have you join us.

Grad Girls Sydney brings together students, graduates, and industry professionals to support women as they begin their careers in STEM. The program aims to provide practical insights, valuable connections, and a space where you can ask questions, explore ideas, and learn from people working across a range of STEM fields.

2026 marks the inaugural year of Grad Girls Sydney, which makes this cohort particularly special. As members of the first group, you are helping us shape the experience for those who will participate in the years ahead and contributing to a community that we hope will continue to grow for many years to come. We are grateful that you have chosen to be part of this first chapter.

Over the coming months, you will hear from industry leaders, participate in interactive sessions, and meet other graduates who are at a similar stage in their careers.

Starting a career can be exciting, but it can also bring uncertainty. That is completely normal. Grad Girls is not about having everything figured out. It is about building confidence, developing perspective, and creating connections that support you as you move forward.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

We encourage you to fully engage with the sessions, ask questions, and support one another. The more you participate and contribute, the more you will gain from the experience.

If you ever need guidance or have questions during the program, our volunteer team is here to help.

We are excited to welcome you to the first Grad Girls Sydney cohort and look forward to meeting you throughout the year.

Melanie Northrop and Sherry Pang  
Program Leadership, Grad Girls Sydney Program





## WELCOME TO GRAD GIRLS 2026!

We're thrilled to have you join us for an exciting and transformative journey with Grad Girls 2026! This program, proudly run by Women 4 STEM, is designed to support and empower by bridging the gap between your studies and the first step in your careers.

Grad Girls is an annual program open to any woman or gender-diverse tertiary student undertaking a degree in STEM who is interested in a career in STEM. Our program aligns with the academic year, with monthly sessions that include:

- Office tours and educational workshops hosted by industry leaders and partners.
- Guidance in building confidence, writing your first or elevating your existing CV, developing a strong LinkedIn profile and how to use it as a graduate.
- Support in career decision-making - choosing between industry and academia and staying relevant in both.
- Networking opportunities to connect with industry professionals and peers.

And so much more!





## **WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?**

Being a Grad Girl means access to incredible opportunities and resources, including:

- Exclusive Grad Girls merch bag (because who doesn't love free goodies?) if you attend the kick-off event
- Giveaways donated by our amazing partners
- Access to exclusive webinars to enhance your learning
- Tickets to professional networking events when available
- A fabulous graduation gift at the end of the program
- And much more!

## **BEYOND YOUR GRADES:**

What Employers Really Look For:

Did you know that while your grades can open doors, employers are looking for more than just academic success? They value:

- Motivation & Initiative
- Communication & Teamwork
- Time & Conflict Management
- Proactiveness & Personal Growth

These are the skills that set great candidates apart, and Grad Girls is here to help you develop them!



## WHAT SETS GRAD GIRLS APART?

Exclusive Industry Access – Connect with leading companies and learn directly from senior professionals.

Direct Support – Be part of a supportive community of women guiding you through this journey.

Career Opportunities – Early connections with recruiters to help you secure a job before you graduate.

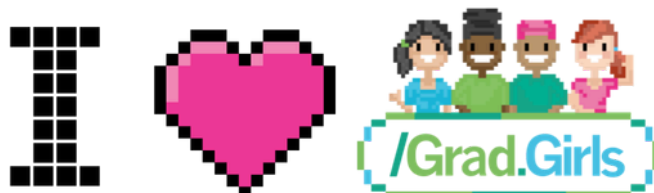
## 2026 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Main program events- Kick-Off, Career & Networking Night & Graduation

In-person/hybrid partner-hosted events

Virtual events

We are so excited to embark on this journey with you! Keep an open mind, take every opportunity, and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone, this program is designed to help you grow, learn, and thrive!





## GRADUATION CRITERIA

### TO GRADUATE FROM THIS PROGRAM YOU MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

- **Kick-Off Event:** Engaging in Kick Off is mandatory (whether it be attending in-person or virtual, or watching the recording)
- **Program Events:** Attend at least 70% in-person and virtual events throughout the program
- **Complete** all mandatory **program surveys** by the deadlines provided

## MANDATORY SURVEYS

There's 3 mandatory surveys to be completed in order to fulfil one of the graduation criteria above. These are designed to collect data to allow us to ensure that you are getting the most out of the program. Please answer these surveys with as much detail as possible. We'll not share any private or identifying information. We want Grad Girls to be the very best it can be, for each one of you!



**COMPLETE YOUR  
BASELINE SURVEY  
NOW!**





## **GRADUATION CRITERIA CONTINUED**

When registering for the program, you acknowledged:

- You have understood and met the entry criteria to join the Grad Girls 2026 program.
- You have read the graduation criteria and agree to make all reasonable efforts to fulfil it.
- Failure to meet the criteria will render you ineligible to graduate from the program.

We will make reasonable attempts to identify the reasons for your disengagement from the program and to help you to re-engage.

If, despite our efforts to reengage you, you are still not making a reasonable effort to attend both virtual and in-person events, you may be disqualified from the program.

Participants who are disqualified from graduating will no longer be permitted to attend in-person partner events, virtual events or be eligible for internship and graduate role opportunities from our partners.

Registering for an in-person partner event and not showing up with less than 48 hours' notice of your intent not to attend, or no notice at all, could disqualify you from the program.



# OUR 2026 PARTNERS

We are happy to welcome our Sponsors for the 2026 program. You will have multiple opportunities to meet, network with and learn from these amazing companies throughout the year



Sharp & Carter





# COMMS

## HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE WITH YOU?

Our primary method of communication will be to the email address that you registered with and the Grad Girls Discord channels. To make sure you do not miss any important announcements, please be sure to check your email regularly and notify us immediately if your email changes.

If you have opted out of joining the Discord group, please note it will be your responsibility to ensure you check and read your emails carefully to ensure you do not miss out on opportunities and information that can help you. To opt in, please email the team: [students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au](mailto:students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au)

## HOW CAN YOU COMMUNICATE WITH US?

You can email us directly at the below email address with any questions or concerns. Please be aware that Grad Girls is run entirely by a team of dedicated volunteers and have jobs during the day outside of running this program. Our volunteers will get back to you as soon as they are able to.

[STUDENTS.GRADGIRLS@WOMEN4STEM.COM.AU](mailto:STUDENTS.GRADGIRLS@WOMEN4STEM.COM.AU)



# THE TEAM

## WHO IS RUNNING THE PROGRAM THIS YEAR?

We are lucky to have a team of volunteers assisting with delivering the program this year. You will have an opportunity to meet them all over the course of the next few months at various events. Let's get you familiar with some key people here who you will interact with consistently throughout the year:



**MELANIE NORTHROP**  
**GRAD GIRLS/ PROGRAM LEAD**



**SHERRY PANG**  
**GRAD GIRLS/ PROGRAM LEAD 2IC**



**MELANIE NINOVIC**  
**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR**



# BUT DID YOU READ IT?

## HOW TO READ YOUR EMAILS

We know what you're thinking. Ummm, I KNOW how to read emails...duh! But we do need to point out this one very important point.

**SKIMMING IS NOT THE SAME AS READING.**

There have been multiple instances in the past where we have had Grads miss out on opportunities because they only skimmed the email and did not really read it.

We hate spam emails as much as the rest of you so rest assured, if you have an email from us, there is something important you need in it.

It might be:

**An internship or graduate role opportunity**

**An event announcement with ticket link**

**Important information on how to get to an event**

**A date or time change for an event**

**An opportunity to win a prize or giveaway**

**There may be multiple event ticket links in the same email**

To get the most out of your experience, grab a cuppa and take a minute to really read what we send you. It will serve you well to become accustomed to paying attention to detail when it comes time to start your career planning.



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

At Grad Girls, you truly get out what you put in. This is an exclusive program with limited places. When someone joins and then doesn't show up, it not only impacts their own experience - it also takes a spot from another student who might have really needed it.

Our events and group mentoring are powered by many volunteer hours; disengagement is disappointing because it diminishes the value of that collective effort.

We're here to help you succeed and graduate. If you're struggling for any reason—academic, personal, scheduling, access—please reach out to the Student Engagement Team. We'll work with you on options and support.

## **What Engagement Looks Like**

Show up, participate, and follow through. That means attending events (in-person or virtual), contributing thoughtfully, and completing follow-ups like surveys or reflections. Consistent engagement helps you build skills, networks, and confidence - and keeps our community vibrant.

## **Engagement Prizes & Giveaways**

We run prizes and giveaways throughout the year to celebrate active participation. You can earn entries and win spot prizes by completing any of the actions on the next page (within the stated timeframes). Keep proof (e.g., screenshots/links) and submit to the Student Engagement Team when requested.



# HOW TO WIN!

## Ways to earn engagement prizes:

- **Share insights on LinkedIn (within 1 week of an event, either in-person or virtual):** Post an insightful reflection after attending an event. Tag Grad Girls, Women 4 STEM, and any relevant partners.
- **Complete the post-event survey (within 1 week):** After any in-person or virtual event, return the survey to help us improve.
- **Email a detailed testimonial (within 1 week):** Tell us what you enjoyed most at your most recently attended event, in-person or virtual. Your testimonial may be featured on our social media! Send to [students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au](mailto:students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au)
- **Engage live in virtual events:** Turn on your camera (where possible) and ask a meaningful question during the session.
- **Write a blog:** Submit a blog that may be published on the Women 4 STEM website and social channels. Topics can include your Grad Girls journey, studying for a career in STEM, or anything resonating with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Email submissions to [students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au](mailto:students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au). We'll feature one blog per month; you may submit multiple times across the year.

There will be one winner drawn each month for a student engagement prize. Submitting any of the above entries will earn you a chance at the prize. The winner is contacted individually and also announced in the discord channel. Late or incomplete submissions may not be eligible.



# TIPS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR GRAD GIRLS JOURNEY

**YOU GET OUT WHAT YOU PUT IN - BE PROACTIVE, PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS, AND ENGAGE WITH MENTORS AND PEERS.**

**BE ACCOUNTABLE - SHOW UP TO EVENTS, COMPLETE TASKS, AND STAY COMMITTED TO YOUR GROWTH.**

**NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK - BUILD CONNECTIONS WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

**TAKE NOTES & ASK QUESTIONS - EVERY SESSION IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, SO MAKE THE MOST OF IT!**

**STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE - CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO TRY NEW THINGS AND EMBRACE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.**

**CONNECT WITH GRAD GIRLS ON LINKEDIN AND REGULARLY COMMENT AND REACT WITH OUR POSTS. THIS IS AN EASY WAY TO START BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND AND GETTING “SEEN” BY OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS**

We're so excited to embark on this journey with you! Keep an open mind, take every opportunity, and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone- this program is designed to help you grow, learn, and thrive! Let's make 2026 a year of growth and empowerment!





**LINK WITH US!**

**Follow the Grad Girls page on LinkedIn to stay up to date** with what is happening throughout the year and gain an opportunity to connect with your fellow participants, the Women 4 STEM team and even some of our Corporate Partners!



**IF POSTING ABOUT YOUR GRAD GIRLS EXPERIENCE, BE SURE TO TAG US AND WE MIGHT EVEN REPOST IT ON OUR PAGE!**

**#GRADGIRLS2026 #WOMEN4STEM #GRADGIRLSSYDNEY**

# WHO & HOW TO CONTACT US

From time to time, you may need to reach out to us. Any queries that you have during the course of the year should be directed to our dedicated student engagement team.

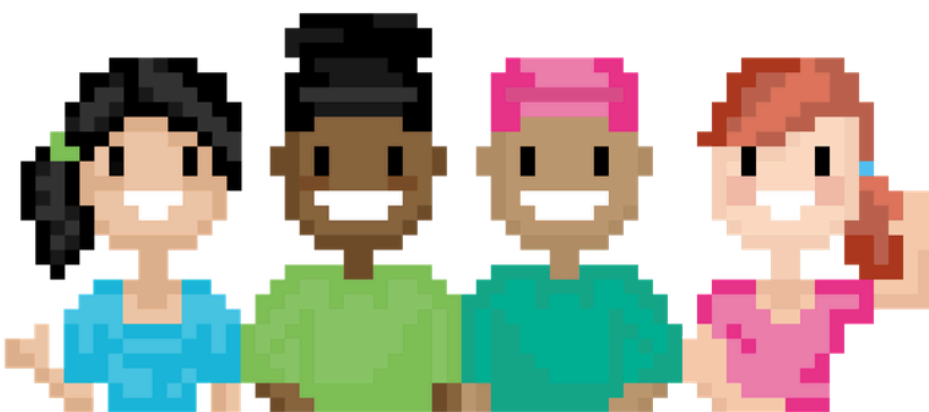
Event related enquiries

Submissions for blogs and testimonials for engagement prizes

Any other general questions and concerns

[STUDENTS.GRADGIRLS@WOMEN4STEM.COM.AU](mailto:STUDENTS.GRADGIRLS@WOMEN4STEM.COM.AU)

Please be advised that our student engagement team are volunteers and will respond to your enquiry as soon as possible.





# DISCORD INSTRUCTIONS

## Step 1: Install Discord using one of the below options:

Browser: Go to <https://discord.com>

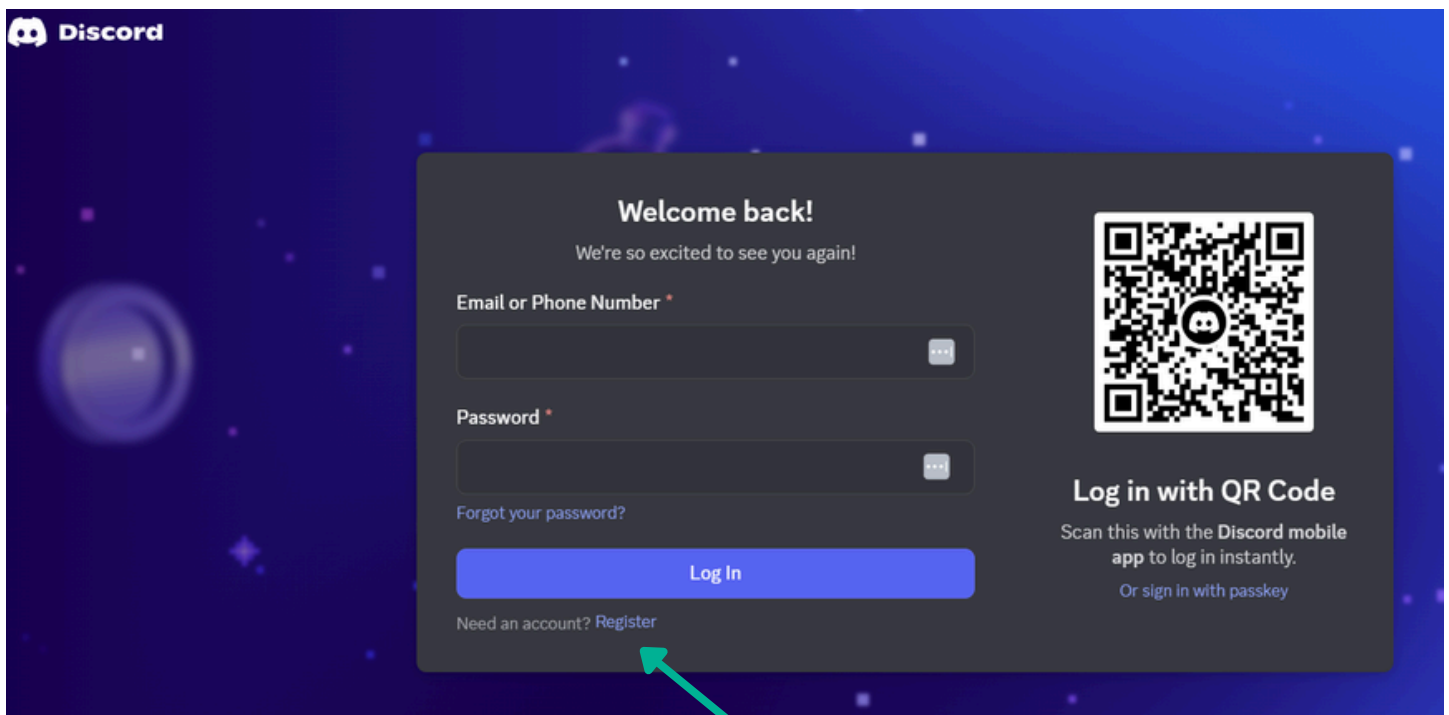
Desktop App: Download from <https://discord.com/download>

Mobile App: Install Discord from the App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android)

## Step 2: Register a Discord Account:

Open Discord App or Website

Click 'Register' (under Login button)





# DISCORD INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the prompts - enter your personal email, a display name, a username, a password (don't forget to save it), your birth date

Click 'Create Your Account'

Head to your email; you should receive a confirmation email from Discord. Click the link in the email to verify your Discord account

## **Step 3: Join the 'Grad Girls Sydney Program 2026' Discord server**

Once signed in, click this link to join our server:

<https://discord.gg/7Q7qKKfxZJ>

When you're in the server, you'll see various channels: announcements, general chat, program Q&A, jobs board, etc.

**It's important that to check all channels regularly to keep up to date with our announcements & program info**

**The Discord link does expire, if you have any issues email our student engagement team for a new link.**



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## CODE OF CONDUCT

### **Introduction:**

Women 4 STEM is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and ethical environment for all members. This Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviour and responsibilities of individuals associated with our organisation. By participating in our programs including but not limited to Go Girl – Go for IT, Grad Girls, Grad Girls Tech, Importance of Women, What's Hot in Tech and Mentor(SHE), you agree to abide by this code.

### **1. Respect for Others:**

- Treat all individuals including partners, volunteers and members with dignity, respect, and kindness.
- Avoid any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic.
- Listen actively to others and consider their perspectives.
- Treat our par venues with respect.
- Attend events that are specifically for the program you are involved with or have paid entry to.

### **2. Integrity and Honesty:**

- Act with honesty and integrity in all dealings within and on behalf of the organisation.
- Avoid conflicts of interest that could compromise the organisation's mission or values.
- Report any unethical behaviour or concerns promptly to the appropriate authorities within the organisation.



<WOMEN.4/STEM>

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### 3. Accountability:

- Fulfill your commitments and responsibilities within the organisation to the best of your ability.
- Take ownership of your actions and their consequences.
- Admit mistakes and work towards resolving them constructively.

### 4. Confidentiality:

- Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information and personal data entrusted to you by the organisation or its members.
- Do not disclose or misuse confidential information without proper authorisation.

### 5. Inclusivity:

- Embrace diversity and promote an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and welcome.
- Seek to include all voices, opinions, and perspectives in decision-making processes.

### 6. Professionalism:

- Behave professionally and ethically when representing the organisation in any capacity.
- Behave professionally and ethically when attending events under the banner of Women 4 STEM or its sponsors and partners.
- Follow all applicable laws and regulations.



<WOMEN.4/STEM>

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### 7. Use of Resources:

- Use the organisation's resources, including funds and assets, responsibly and for their intended purpose.
- Avoid any misuse or misappropriation of resources.

### 8. Social Responsibility:

- Act in a manner that promotes the well-being of the community and the broader society.
- Engage in volunteer and charitable activities that align with the organisation's mission.

### 9. Compliance with Policies:

- Familiarize yourself with and adhere to all organisational policies and guidelines where applicable.
- Seek clarification or guidance when uncertain about any policy or procedure where applicable.

### 10. Reporting Violations:

- If you witness or experience any violation of this Code of Conduct, report it promptly to the appropriate authorities within the organisation.



# <WOMEN.4/STEM> CODE OF CONDUCT

## **Consequences of Violation:**

Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to warnings, suspension, or expulsion from the organisation, as deemed appropriate by the organisation's leadership.

## **Conclusion:**

By participating in Women 4 STEM as a member, you commit to upholding the principles and values outlined in this Code of Conduct. Your adherence to this code contributes to the success and integrity of our organisation. Women 4 STEM reserves the right to update or modify this Code of Conduct as needed.

Participants will be notified of any changes, and it is their responsibility to stay informed and in compliance.



# MEDIA & PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT NOTICE

Grad Girls programs, including Grad Girls Tech Victoria, Grad Girls Sydney, and Grad Girls Brisbane, regularly capture photographs and video at program events, workshops, partner events, and related activities.

By participating in the Grad Girls program, you acknowledge that photos and video may be taken in which you may appear. These images and recordings may be used for marketing, promotional, reporting, and communications purposes by Grad Girls and Women 4 STEM, including but not limited to use on websites, social media channels, digital publications, presentations, and promotional materials. This includes the Women 4 STEM website, Women 4 STEM social media channels, and Grad Girls social media channels.

Participation in events implies consent for the use of your image and/or likeness unless you choose to opt out.

If you do not wish to be photographed or filmed, it is your responsibility to:

- Opt out of group photo opportunities where possible, and
- Clearly notify the photographer and/or videographer at the event that you do not consent to your image being captured or used.

Grad Girls and Women 4 STEM will make reasonable efforts to respect opt-out requests; however, we cannot guarantee exclusion from all incidental background imagery.

If you have questions or concerns regarding media use, please contact the Grad Girls team prior to or during the event.



**YOU HAVE MADE IT  
TO THE END!**

Now it is time to begin your Grad Girls journey. You might remember our earlier section in this book about student engagement and prizes. Well, here is your first chance to win. Email us the secret code “READ IT” to [students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au](mailto:students.gradgirls@women4stem.com.au) and go into the draw to win a prize. Use the subject line “ **I read it!-Your Name**” Winners for this activity are drawn at random.

## **GRAD GIRLS REMEMBER....**

This program is a marathon, not a sprint. Stay involved and stay engaged for the full duration and you WILL grow your confidence, build your network, curate your personal brand and start your career in STEM by setting yourself apart. And if you are nervous, or an introvert...Trust the process!



**SOMETIMES THE  
BRAVEST AND  
MOST IMPORTANT  
THING YOU CAN DO  
IS JUST SHOW UP.**



**Brene Brown**

