

HE Employability Digest

A regular update on policy developments, reports and opportunities to influence decision-making in HE employability from The Careers Group, University of London

Number 2 — November 2016

Updates

Graduate unemployment rate falls from 6.3% in 2015 to 5.7% in 2016

HECSU, Prospects, AGCAS (2016) What Do Graduates Do?

http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_what_do_graduates_do.htm

The annual *What Do Graduates Do?* report published on 3 November 2016 by HECSU, Prospects and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) reports that graduates are working in more professional roles with the proportion in non-graduate jobs after six months falling from 32% in 2015 to 29% in 2016. Other findings include:

- 76.1% were in employment and 5.7% were unemployed, compared to 6.3% unemployed in the 2015 study.
- 5.1% were working and studying
- 13.1% had continued with further study or training
- Average salaries of graduates employed full-time in the UK was £21,690.

The number of first degrees awarded to UK domiciled graduates in 2014/15 was 312,330, down 25,900 on the previous year. As a consequence, the number known to have been in work after six months also fell from 199,810 in 2015 to 189,245 in 2016.

As fewer graduates entered the labour market, there are clear signs of a shortage in many occupations, notably in nursing, engineering, construction, teaching, IT and parts of the business services industry.

Charlie Ball, head of higher education intelligence at Prospects said:

“This year’s graduates can be reassured that we are approaching Brexit with a graduate jobs market that is in relatively good shape, certainly the best it has been for some time. By the start of next year, the large majority will be in work or in postgraduate study.

Leaving the EU will disrupt our graduate labour market, but it won’t kill it. Although a hit to graduate career prospects is likely, the story of the UK economy will continue with increased reliance on highly skilled people to drive growth. However, exactly where the impact will fall and how large it will be is still highly uncertain, presenting challenges to careers and employability professionals supporting students and graduates.”

More collaboration needed between the higher education sector and employers, particularly SMEs

UUK Social Mobility Report - http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/working-in-partnership-enabling-social-mobility-in-higher-education.aspx?mc_cid=1395e2a1d7&mc_eid=41774b1916

- Students from more privileged backgrounds benefit from effective information, advice and guidance (IAG) from their schools, their parents and broader networks.
- This is often absent, or less effective, for students from more disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have the same cultural capital at home and through their networks and quality of IAG in state schools is often patching, compounding disadvantage.
- It will be critical to ensure that IAG is broadly coherent and joined-up between schools, colleges, universities, charities and employers.

Recommendations

- The report therefore recommends improving IAG relating to opportunities for mature students, including information on the increasing diversity of routes both into and through higher education and the role of higher and degree level apprenticeships.
- The report highlights the critical role of employers for improving social mobility, given the mass of evidence which points to socio-economic background still being the most important factor in determining a graduate's career – often irrespective of the university attended.
- There is a need to enhance collaborative activity between the higher education sector and employers, particularly with small and medium enterprises, with more needing to be done to improve the inclusivity of recruitment practices, including the monitoring and publication of recruitment data, especially from underrepresented groups, and sharing effective practice and interventions.

51% undergraduates feel 'equipped for the world of work'

HEA - UKES Engagement survey 2016
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/ukes_2016_report_final_nov16.pdf

- The UKES 2016 survey of over 23,000 undergraduates is the only major undergraduate survey in the UK higher education sector that measures students' engagement with their studies

Key findings

- While overall 88% of undergraduates say they find their course challenging, just 51% reported that they have strongly developed the skills that ready them for the world of work and will help them get a job.
- 94% of students report taking responsibility for their own learning
- 88% are 'challenged to do their best work'
- Less encouraging, however, is that only 27% of undergraduates have discussed ideas with staff outside class and still fewer, 20%, had talked to staff about their career plans.
- While the levels of engagement in pre and post-1992 institutions were broadly comparable in areas such as critical thinking and course challenge, students at post-1992 institutions would appear to engage more closely with staff (37%), than those at pre-1992s (26%).
- By measuring both engagement and skills development within the same data set, UKES can pinpoint links between the two.
- In this case, HEA analysis shows that students who collaborate most with staff and other students are also the most likely to feel their career skill development has been maximised – highlighting the importance of trying to improve the relatively low levels of engagement in these areas.
- The report paints a very positive 86% score across all subject areas for students in developing their skills as independent learners.
- Nevertheless, there are striking differences in some of the softer skills areas, for example where some STEM subjects - mathematics in particular - showed much lower levels of development than social studies or subjects allied to medicine.

HEA Chief Executive Professor Stephanie Marshall said:

“It’s very encouraging to see that students are closely engaged with their degree programmes and taking responsibility for their learning. “But the lower scores in the area of interaction with staff show that opportunities are being missed to help and support students to develop as more rounded individuals. And that’s important in helping students fulfil their potential beyond university. We are working with a number of institutions, both in the UK and internationally, to support their engagement and employability strategies. We are finding these strategic approaches make a difference.

See more at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/about/news/ukes-2016-undergraduates-engaged-their-courses-only-half-feel-equipped-world-work?utm_source=CRM%20-%20HEA%20Update&utm_campaign=Surveys%20-%20UKES&utm_medium=Email#sthash.QleVdiDK.dpuf

Consultations and feedback

Degree apprenticeships – survey request

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5FT2DSD>

- UUK, Guild HE and HEFCE are surveying the English HE sector to see how it is engaging with and developing degree apprenticeships provision with an aim to produce a report outlining how the sector is responding to DA initiatives.
- Questions require detailed information about your institution’s view and position on degree apprenticeships, whether you are implementing them, considering their implementation or not.
- Submissions are open until **Wednesday 23 November 2016**

Postgraduate doctoral loans – open consultation

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/postgraduate-doctoral-loans?mc_cid=bf842bbb20&mc_eid=1bf93110cf

- The Department for Education are seeking external views on a postgraduate doctoral loan.
- This will offer eligible applicants up to £25,000 towards the cost of their studies. The loan will be repaid on an income-contingent basis, and DfE aim to launch it in the 2018 to 2019 academic year.
- DfE are very interested in hearing what you think about the proposed loan.
- They will consider all responses and use these to inform the design of the doctoral loan.
- Submissions are open until **Friday 16 December 2016 5:00pm**

Part-time undergraduate maintenance loan – open consultation

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/part-time-undergraduate-maintenance-oan?mc_cid=bf842bbb20&mc_eid=1bf93110cf

- The Department for Education would like to know what you think about the proposed income-contingent loan for undergraduate part-time study.
- Responses should focus on the details of the loan, including:
 - loan terms
 - course and individual eligibility
 - loan implementation
- Submissions are open until **Friday 16 December 2016 5:00pm**