



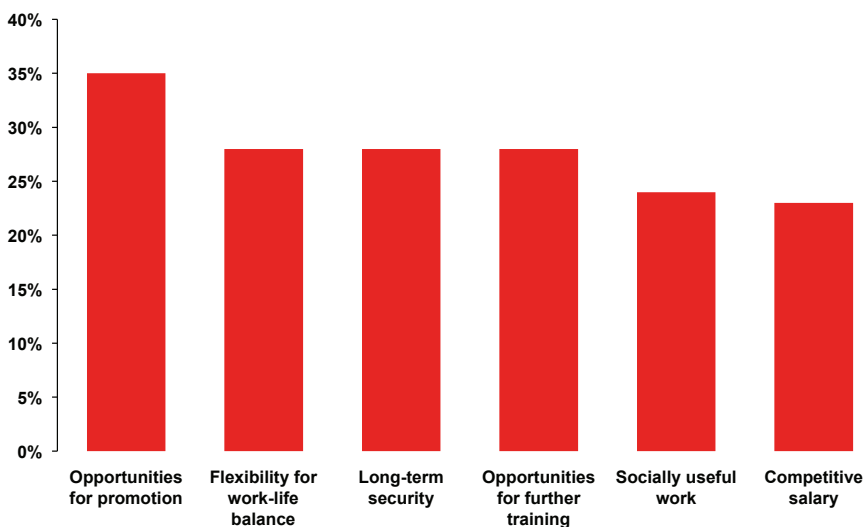
FUTURETRACK

FUTURETRACK is following a group of students from UCAS application until they get their first job in order to build a 'real-time' picture that reveals how, when and why students make decisions.

The study is helping the government, careers advisers and education professionals to provide the best possible information and guidance to students throughout their academic careers.

Searching for Jobs

WHAT WERE STUDENTS LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY SEARCHED FOR GRADUATE JOBS?*



*% of students who rated the attribute as '1' on a scale of '1' to '7' where '1' = most important and '7' = least important

KEY QUESTIONS

What do students look for when they are applying for jobs?

Do students value opportunities for promotion?

Do they look for opportunities for further training?

- Mature students were less likely than younger students to be looking for a job which offered opportunities for promotion or a competitive salary. Fewer than 80% of students aged 26 and over said it was important that their next job offered opportunities for promotion (79%) or a competitive salary (78%), compared to over 85% of students aged 18 and under (90% and 85% respectively).
- Students studying engineering and technology, law, or business and

administration were among those most likely to rate long-term security and competitive salary as the most important attributes of any potential job. Students studying art and design were the least likely to rate competitive salary as the most important attribute of a job.

- Students studying education, social studies or subjects allied to medicine were the most likely to feel it was important to work for an ethical organisation, and those studying social

studies and subjects allied to medicine were also the most likely to value the opportunity to perform socially useful work.

- Men were more likely than women to rate a competitive salary and opportunities to work abroad as important, while women were more likely than men to value opportunities for further training, long term security, flexibility, and the opportunity to perform socially useful work or work for an ethical organisation.

FINALISTS ON CAREER PLANS

'Some graduate jobs are quite strange. I have no idea what a 'support consultant' is or what it involves, and the job descriptions can be baffling and sound very dull indeed. I like being out in the field with some nice rocks and glaciers; much more exciting and mentally stimulating.'

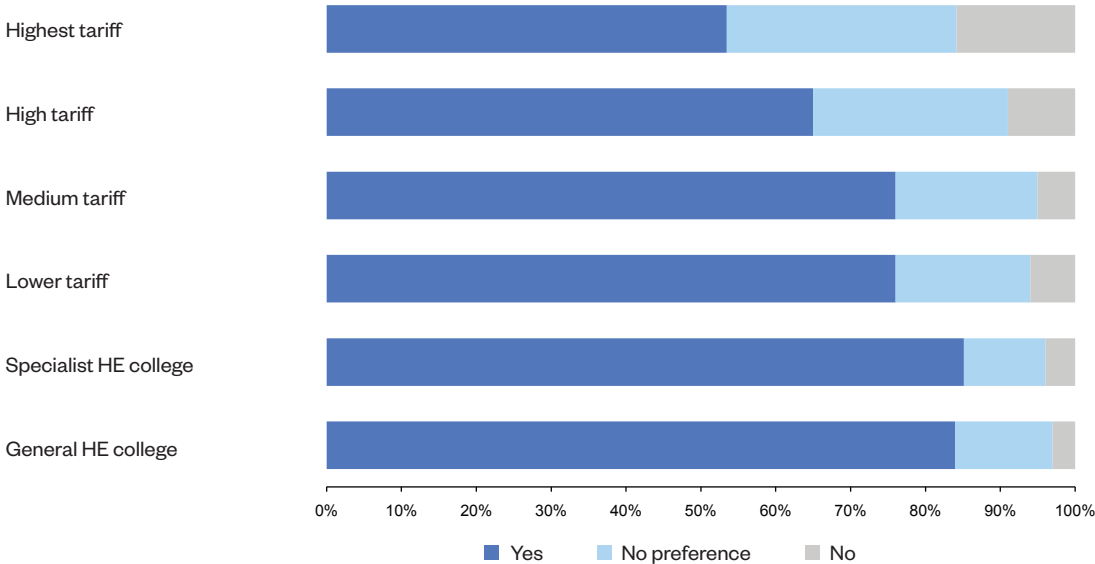
Female, high tariff university, physical sciences

'I have spent three years developing a specialist vocabulary, knowledge, critical analysis abilities, and interest in politics. Plus, the normal destinations for [students from my university] with non-specialist degrees - financial sector, large corporations, law - are not as attractive now as they were two years ago. I would like to pursue a

career that is exciting, where I feel that I am able to learn new knowledge and techniques. A lot of jobs in the city are more about being able to work late hours, wear a suit well and banter around the coffee machine - not my kind of career'

Male, highest tariff university, social studies

Did students hope to secure a job in a field related to their degree subject?



KEY QUESTIONS

How many students expect to get a job in a field related to their degree subject?

Where do students look for jobs?

Do students studying different subjects look in different places?

DID STUDENTS HOPE TO SECURE A JOB IN A FIELD RELATED TO THEIR DEGREE SUBJECT?

- Around two-thirds of students hoped to secure a job in a field related to their degree subject. Many of these students had enjoyed their course and felt that, having invested time and money studying a particular subject, it would be

a waste not to apply this knowledge in employment.

- Students studying vocational courses (e.g. subjects allied to medicine, education, architecture, engineering, and law) were the most likely to say they hoped to find a job related to the subject they had studied. Students studying these subjects who did not plan to find

a job related to their subject generally attributed their decision to having made a mistake in choosing to study that subject in the first place.

- Students studying at lower tariff universities were more likely than those studying at higher tariff universities to be looking for a job related to the subject they had studied.

WHERE DID STUDENTS LOOK FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES?

- When searching for employment opportunities, Futuretrack students relied on sources which were relatively easy to access, such as employers' websites (69%), graduate vacancy publications (63%), or their university careers service (52%). Around 50% had asked friends or family to help them find a job, but only around a third (39%) had made a

speculative approach to a company directly.

- Students studying subjects allied to medicine, engineering and technology, architecture, building and planning or education were the most likely to have referred to specialist trade or professional publications when searching for jobs. Students studying education were also the most likely to have searched for jobs advertised in the national and local press.

- Students studying physical sciences, mathematics or computing sciences, law, historical or philosophical studies, business or administration studies, or linguistics or classics were the most likely to have searched for jobs on their university careers service website. Students studying art and design, education, or subjects allied to medicine were the least likely to have used this resource.

FINALISTS ON CAREER PLANS

'Although mathematics is fascinating, music (specifically recording/producing) is the hobby that takes up all of my free time, and doing that professionally is my dream job'

Male, highest tariff university, mathematical and computing sciences

'I had a career path in mind before I enrolled upon my course and it would seem relatively foolish to spend a substantial amount of money on a course that would have no bearing on my future'

Male, lower tariff university, interdisciplinary subjects

'My reasons for having a career in law were initially all for the wrong reasons - only for financial gain. Having studied law for 3 years it has made me realise that although it is a stimulating degree, it is completely different when used in practice thus I am not keen to have a career in law'

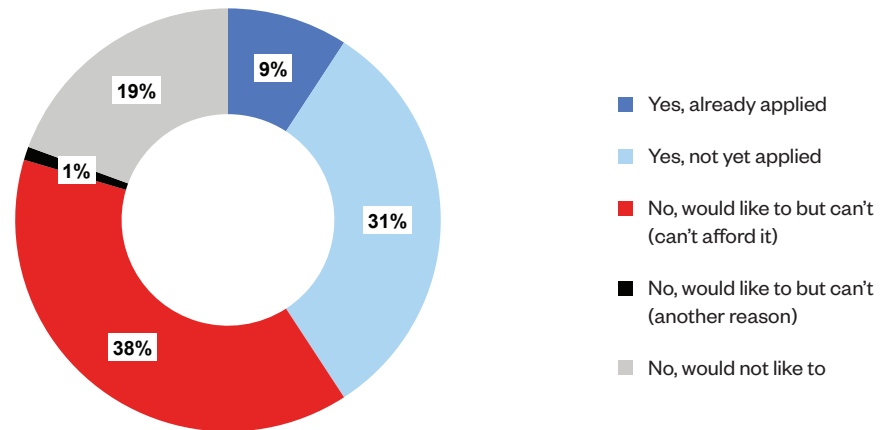
Female, highest tariff university, law

KEY QUESTIONS

Would students apply for unpaid work or internships to gain work experience?

Which students would consider applying for unpaid work or internships?

PERCENTAGE OF FINALISTS WHO WOULD CONSIDER APPLYING FOR UNPAID WORK/INTERNSHIPS TO GAIN WORK EXPERIENCE



WOULD STUDENTS APPLY FOR UNPAID WORK OR INTERNSHIPS TO GAIN WORK EXPERIENCE?

- Nearly 80% of students reported they would consider applying for unpaid work or internships to gain work experience. Over a third said that they would like to apply for unpaid work or internships, but could not afford to.
- While the financial implications of undertaking unpaid work are a barrier for many students, socioeconomic background appears to have little effect on the likelihood of students applying for unpaid jobs or internships. 41% of

students from professional or managerial backgrounds said they had applied, or were planning to apply, for an unpaid job or internship (compared to 42% of students from intermediate occupational backgrounds and 38% of students from routine or manual backgrounds), while 37% said they would like to apply for an unpaid job or internship, but could not afford to work for free (compared to 39% of students from intermediate backgrounds and 40% of students from routine or manual backgrounds).

- Students studying arts subjects (particularly those studying mass communications and documentation or

creative arts and design) were the most likely to say they had applied, or were planning to apply, for an unpaid job or internship, which is likely to reflect the prevalence and importance of unpaid internships in these fields¹.

- Students who had not undertaken a work experience placement as part of their course were more likely than students who had completed a placement to say that they planned to apply for unpaid work or internships to gain more experience after they graduated.

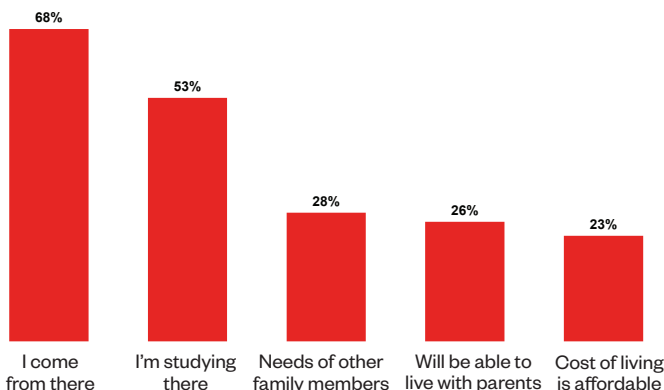
¹ Cabinet Office. (2009). Unleashing aspiration: the final report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions. London: Cabinet Office.

KEY QUESTIONS

Are some students more prepared than others to move in order to find work?

What determines where students look for work?

WHAT PROMPTS STUDENTS TO LOOK FOR JOBS IN A PARTICULAR LOCATION?



PREFERRED LOCATIONS

- Students at higher tariff universities were more likely than those at lower tariff universities to say they would consider moving within the UK or abroad to find work, while those from lower tariff universities were more likely to say they planned to find jobs locally.
- Students who lived at home during their course were less likely than students who lived away from home to see themselves moving for their career.

Futuretrack

FUTURETRACK

FUTURETRACK is funded by the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) - a charity with 40 years experience in higher education research. The study is being conducted by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

www.hecsu.ac.uk

www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier

FURTHER INFORMATION

- More information about the project www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_futuretrack.htm
- Download research reports in full www.hecsu.ac.uk/futuretrack_research_reports.htm
- Find out more about Futuretrack: part-time students www.hecsu.ac.uk/futuretrack_part_time_students.htm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Summary report prepared by HECSU.
- Research by Kate Purcell and colleagues at the Warwick Institute for Employment Research.



NOTES ON ANALYSIS

- **Socioeconomic background:** researchers used the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification to determine applicants' socioeconomic background - the three-category version: professional/managerial occupations, intermediate occupations and routine/manual occupations.
- **Higher education institutions:** higher education institutions were ranked according to their UCAS tariff points score, and then grouped according to their ranking. Six categories were identified: Highest Tariff, High Tariff, Medium Tariff, Lower Tariff, General HE College, and Specialist HE College.
- Read more about this classification in: Purcell, K., Elias, P. and Atfield, G. (2009). A new classification of higher education institutions. Manchester: HECSU www.hecsu.ac.uk.