

Careers Thinking and Destinations

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Rationale

Data collected annually from undergraduates since 2014/15, so:

- Changes in careers thinking over time can be tracked for a single student cohort
- Careers thinking for a large group of finalists can be linked to graduate destinations data.

Analysis conducted to support the Careers Registration Learning Gain pilot.

Statistical approach to real data to:

- Test hypothesised links between careers thinking and graduate destinations
- Inform our approach to using careers registration data to support students
- Support the project to make institutional comparisons that inform their recommendations.

Approach

Single dataset created for 2014/15 and 2015/16 graduating cohort from:

Careers thinking and work experience	Careers Service engagement	Graduate destinations	Demographic characteristics
Final year careers registration response (Oracle)	Final year events and appointments attended (CareerHub)	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (Access)	Student records system (SITS)
Phase of careers thinking, employability enhancing experience	Theme or topic of event, type of appointment	Derived activity, graduate level role, motivation for taking role, salary	Gender, age on entry, ethnicity, disability, neighbourhood participation, fee status

Used to identify drivers of:

- Being in employment
- Being employed in a graduate level role

By testing links with destination and:

- Careers thinking
- Type of work experience
- Final year activity

For 2015/16 graduates only, a tracked dataset for this cohort over 2 years

Careers thinking and work experience	Graduate destinations
Final and penultimate year careers registration response (Oracle)	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (Access)

Used to test impact of change in careers thinking on:

- Being in employment
- Being employed in a graduate level role.

Findings

1. Work experience

Final year students who are in the 'compete' or 'position confirmed' phase and have undertaken work experience in the last 12 months are **no more likely to be in a graduate level role than those with no work experience.**

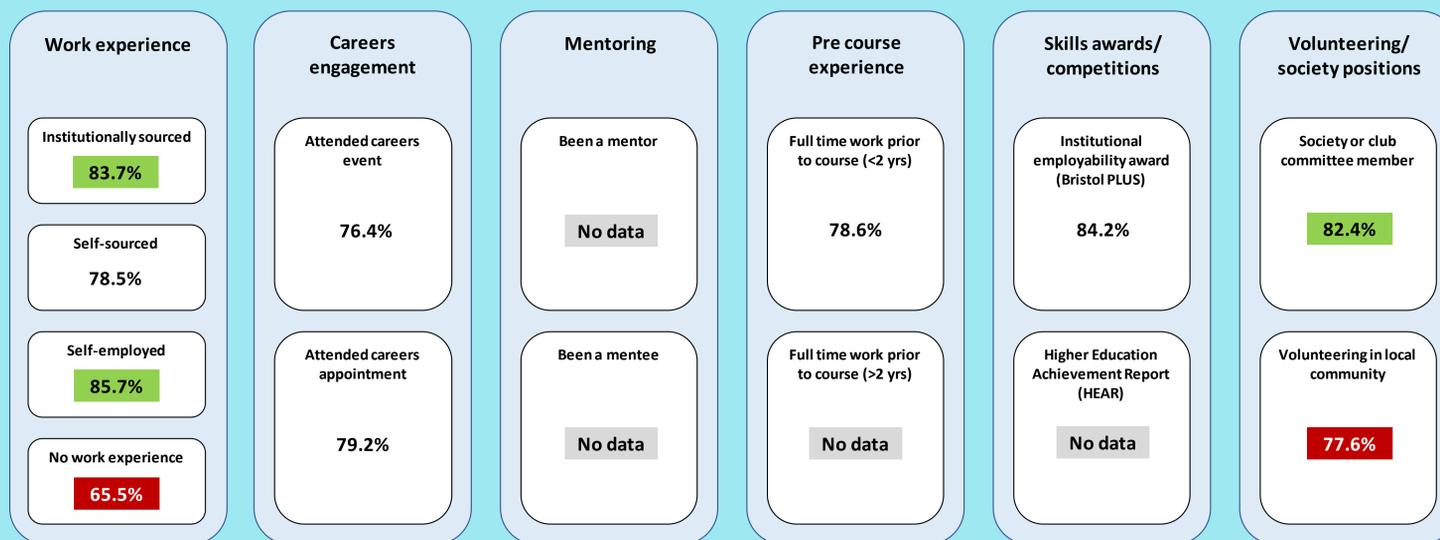
Certain types of work experience are more closely linked to being in a graduate level role (although the number with such experience is small) (see figure 1):

- Placement as part of a course or work shadowing
- Self-employment
- Society or committee club member

Final year students who have no work experience are considerably less likely to be in employment after graduation and statistically less likely to be in a graduate level role.

The variety of work experiences undertaken is more closely linked to being in employment than the volume of work experience – and neither variety nor volume seems to impact on being in a graduate level role.

Figure 1: Proportion of all graduates in graduate level employment



xx.x% Result is significantly higher than overall proportion of graduates in graduate level employment (statistically significant at 95% confidence level)

xx.x% Result is significantly lower than overall proportion of graduates in graduate level employment (statistically significant at 95% confidence level)

No data Data not collected by the University

2. Careers thinking

Final year students who are further along in their career planning (i.e. in the 'compete' phase) are somewhat more likely to be in employment after graduation and significantly more likely to be in a graduate role.

Figure 2: Relationship between change in careers thinking and employment	Phase of careers thinking			
	Move 'backwards'		Move 'forward'	
	From the later phase of careers thinking to the earlier phase		From the earlier phase of careers thinking to the later phase	
In employment	58	98.3%	482	93.4%
Not in employment	1	1.7%	34	6.6%
Graduate level role	46	79.3%	392	81.3%
Non-graduate role	12	20.7%	90	18.7%

But a change in careers thinking between the penultimate and final year of study has **less impact on outcomes** than the phase of careers thinking reported at the start of the final year (see figure 2).

3. Demographic Characteristics

Female graduates are twice as likely to be in employment after graduation than their male peers, but only half as likely to be in a graduate level role or earning a higher salary (£30,000 and above).

Female graduates are also significantly more likely to be in the earlier phases of careers thinking than their male peers.

Learning Points

Some assumed links between careers thinking and graduate destinations are confirmed, particularly as a predictor of employment, so:

- Using % finalists in explore as a key performance indicator will continue
- Finalists in explore will remain a 'high risk' group for targeted interventions

The assumed need for students to 'progress' in their careers thinking over time is challenged. But the need for early engagement is reinforced, so that students enter their final year of study in a later stage of careers thinking.

Opportunities to develop alternative provision or approaches are highlighted, such as:

- Holding female only networking events or workshops to support students to collaboratively develop their careers thinking before graduation
- Focusing on helping individual final year students with no work or recent work experience to quickly secure an opportunity
- Supporting students to reflect on their work experience, so that they can articulate their employability skills regardless of the work experience type.