



This Thursday June 23rd the entire Lower 6th will be taking part in a UCAS afternoon, which will consist of three workshops to help inform choices for after school. Last week I tuned into a higher education [briefing](#) on topics including job trends for university leavers, work experience whilst studying, degree apprenticeships, student satisfaction and student aspirations. It is just over an hour long and worth watching.

The statistics the briefing shared, which mainly comes from a sample of twelve thousand final year students at over thirty of the United Kingdom's leading universities, should be of interest. I have highlighted some of these below.

- **One in three** students surveyed wished they had chosen a different course. **One in four** wished they had chosen a different university. **One in six** would have preferred to have taken a degree apprenticeship.
- This data should be considered in context, as those final year students have had two years disrupted significantly by the pandemic and there has been significant coverage of the challenges this has presented universities and the impact this has had on learning experiences. However, even if these numbers were to treble in size (e.g. one in nine wished they had chosen a different course) what it highlights to me is that many students will drift into courses and universities with insufficient research and regret it later. Based on conversations we have had with your year group, some of you are very well placed to make some fantastic choices, but others of you are in danger of making rushed decisions on your courses and university options.
- Final year university students were asked what they wanted from their first graduate job. **42%** wanted a role where having a good social life was important, **36%** wanted a job that gave something back to society, and **34%** wanted a job where they would be stretched and challenged on a daily basis. Perhaps more unexpectedly, only **30%** wanted a role with access to 'rapid promotion' and just **24%** wanted a position linked to the degree they had just studied. There are certainly some links with this data set to the 'Great Resignation' phenomenon I wrote about last time.
- Graduate starting salaries can differ hugely, but you perhaps will not be surprised to read that on average the top three highest professions were **Investment Banking (£50K)**, **Law (£50k)** and **Consulting (£47.5K)**. Oil and Energy was fourth (£40K), which coincidentally is close to the figure it now costs now to fill up an average sized family car.
- I unashamedly nag students to do work experience for a number of reasons. One is that it is a way of bypassing the immense competition for graduate roles, highlighted by the fact that 31% of the positions were filled by those who had done work experience with the employer. For Investment Banking and Law the figure is even higher, **76% and 58% respectively!** 59% of graduate employers state that it is not very likely / not at all likely that they would consider an applicant without any work experience. The earlier you start....
- It was really encouraging to hear that graduate recruitment is back on the rise, following a slump in the last two years. It is expected to **increase by 15.7%** this year, which is excellent news.
- I will often signpost students to look at independent league tables when researching university choices, but a factor that does not attract as much attention as I feel it should is their relationships with employers, which can help generate these work experience and graduate opportunities. This year, the three universities 'most targeted by employers' were **Manchester, Nottingham, and Bristol**.
- As mentioned above, a sixth of university students mentioned they wished they had explored obtaining an apprenticeship. Interestingly though, from 2020 – 2021, **257,900** eighteen-year-old students in the UK were at university, whereas just **3,650** were undertaking a degree apprenticeship. There are an abundance of these programmes available, from aerospace engineering to chartered surveying, but demand for these is still relatively low.
- Finally, **over a third of students** surveyed 'complained their school did not advise them well when making their university & subject choices'. Reflecting on the advice the Futures Department offers, you may feel there is some validity in this, but I would also suggest that more of you could utilise the support available more effectively. Last week alone, for example, we have had more than a third of students not attend pre-booked meetings to discuss university options. There is a link there!

I hope that the information above gives all of you something to think about. You are very fortunate that you have lots of choices and options, but as the saying goes, 'you don't know what you don't know'. Time to do some research?

Best wishes

Mr Wain