

# University Tuition Fees and the Graduates of 2011

*Researching the views of final year students at England's leading universities on increased tuition fees.*



*Produced by*



**High Fliers Research Limited**

King's Gate

1 Bravingtons Walk

London N1 9AE

*Telephone:* 020 7428 9000

*Email:* [surveys@highfliers.co.uk](mailto:surveys@highfliers.co.uk)

All information contained in this report is believed to be correct and unbiased, but the publisher does not accept responsibility for any loss arising from decisions made upon this information.

© **High Fliers Research Limited 2011.** All rights reserved.  
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, High Fliers Research Limited.

# Contents

|  | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| Executive Summary                                    | 5           |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                               | <b>7</b>    |
| About the Research                                   | 7           |
| Research Organisers                                  | 7           |
| Fieldwork for the Research                           | 8           |
| <b>2. Students' Views on University Tuition Fees</b> | <b>9</b>    |
| Overview   | 9           |
| Finalists' Views on Increased Tuition Fees           | 10          |
| Analysis of Finalists' Views on £9,000 Tuition Fees  | 12          |
| Conclusions  | 14          |

# New to graduate recruitment?

## Get off to a flying start.

For the last fifteen years, **High Fliers Research** has conducted detailed research into the graduate recruitment market in the UK, providing the country's leading employers with a unique insight into the attitudes and aspirations of final year university students.

Now, the company is delighted to offer **professional training** for new or recently-appointed graduate recruiters through intensive **one-day courses**, available monthly throughout the year at the High Fliers Research Centre in London. The courses have been designed to provide a highly practical insight into best-practice graduate recruitment and are ideal for those with up to 12 months experience of working in recruitment marketing or selection.

*For more information about future training courses or to book a place, please call  
Tim Wise, Research Director on 020 7428 9000 or email [tim.wise@highfliers.co.uk](mailto:tim.wise@highfliers.co.uk)*

## Foreword

# Executive Summary

*University Tuition Fees and the Graduates of 2011* is based on interviews with **12,658** final year students from the ‘Class of 2011’ studying at twenty-four universities in England, carried out by independent market research company **High Fliers Research** in early March 2011. All participating students were UK-domiciled and the sample includes more than a fifth of ‘home’ students graduating from these universities in the summer of 2011

The aim of the survey was to research how many students graduating this summer – whose annual tuition fees have been £3,290 – would have been deterred from going to university by the increased fees of between £6,000 and £9,000 per annum that will be introduced in 2012:

- Over half of final year students at twenty-four universities in England say they would not have come to university if their tuition fees had been £9,000 per annum, the level that most top universities are expected to charge from 2012 onwards, and a third would have been put off doing a degree by fees of £6,000 per annum.
- More than three-fifths of finalists at Loughborough, Sheffield, Lancaster, Liverpool and Reading universities say they would not have started their degrees if fees had been £9,000; students at Oxford and Cambridge were the least concerned by fees at this level.
- Female undergraduates, those with three Grade B’s or less at A-level, those studying languages or arts & humanities subjects, and students whose home region is in the north of England are the most-likely to be deterred by tuition fees of £9,000 per annum.
- Students who attended a state school or college before university are much more likely to be put off going to university by fees of £9,000 a year, than students from private schools.
- Almost two-thirds of finalists with current student debts of more than £20,000 say they wouldn’t have come to university if their annual tuition fees had been £9,000. The average debt for graduates leaving university in 2011 is expected to be £17,500.
- More than half of finalists who plan to work in engineering, information technology and science, research & development – key skills areas where employers currently struggle to recruit sufficient numbers of suitably-qualified graduates – would not have done their degrees if tuition fees had been charged at £9,000 per annum.
- Final year students planning to work in investment banking after university are the least worried about paying higher tuition fees.
- At least three-fifths of final year students who think they’ll earn a graduate salary of £20,000 or less when they begin work wouldn’t have come to university at all if their tuition fees had been £9,000 a year. Graduates from the ‘Class of 2011’ expect to earn an average of £22,100.

# Tuition Fees and the Graduates of 2011

*Universities included in the research.*



## Chapter 1

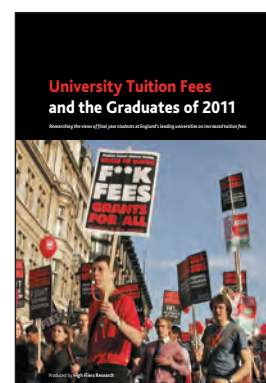
# Introduction

### About the Research

With tuition fees at universities in England set to increase to a maximum of £9,000 per annum in 2012, there has been much discussion and debate about what impact this will have on those who plan to study for a degree in future.

Whilst many students currently at university are clearly opposed to any increase in tuition fees, little is known about whether higher fees of between £6,000 and £9,000 per annum would have actually deterred current undergraduates from starting university and whether students who will be graduating from universities in England later this year – and are therefore well-placed to assess the value of their degrees in the graduate employment market – consider that the increased fees would be a worthwhile investment in their future?

Research for this special report on *University Tuition Fees and the Graduates of 2011* took place in March 2011 with **12,658 final year undergraduates** from twenty-four leading universities in England, each of which is expected to be charging the maximum £9,000 for their degree courses from 2012 onwards. All participating students were UK-domiciled and the survey sample equates to approximately a fifth of ‘home undergraduates’ graduating from these institutions in 2011.



### Research Organisers

**High Fliers Research Limited** is an independent market research company which specialises in student and graduate research at the UK’s leading universities. Established in 1994, the company has now interviewed more than 250,000 university students and worked with over 130 leading employers to measure the impact of their recruitment activities on campus and help them understand their position in the graduate employment market.

The company is best-known for **The UK Graduate Careers Survey**, its innovative annual survey of over 17,000 final year undergraduates at the country’s leading universities. The survey gives employers a unique insight into the career expectations and aspirations of final year students – just weeks before they leave university – and provides a definitive record of their search for a graduate job.

Since 2002, High Fliers Research has also conducted regular surveys of Britain’s top employers to research current graduate vacancy levels, starting salaries and benchmark the latest recruitment practices.



High Fliers Research hosts the UK’s only annual conference exclusively for graduate recruiters, *The National Graduate Recruitment Conference*, at the five-star Grove Hotel in Hertfordshire each September. It also runs monthly one-day professional training courses for new graduate recruiters throughout the year at the High Fliers Research Centre in London.

Internationally, the company works closely with the **Australian Association of Graduate Employers** and the **South African Graduate Recruitment Association** to carry out their annual surveys of graduate employers, new graduate joiners and graduates in work.

## Fieldwork for the Research

Fieldwork for *University Tuition Fees and the Graduates of 2011* was conducted through face-to-face interviews with final year students at twenty-four universities in England. This labour-intensive approach was considered essential to guarantee that a large proportion of final year students participated in the research. Interviewers for the fieldwork were drawn from the student community and over 650 were recruited for the research by local university managers.

Interviews for the research were timed to take place during early March, in the final days of the spring term, just before the start of the Easter holiday. At each university, a team of up to 35 interviewers conducted 25 interviews each, during the ten-day research period. Each interviewer was provided with several university departments from which to select students at random to take part in interviews. This helped ensure that the proportion of students from different subjects at each university interviewed for the survey mirrored closely the proportion of students present at the university. The only university finalists not included within the research were those studying to be doctors, nurses or vets. All of the students who took part in the survey were UK-domiciled final year undergraduates – overseas students and UK students on postgraduate courses were not included within the research.

After the interviews had been completed, approximately five per cent of the original sample were re-interviewed by the survey's full-time research team to confirm the validity of the data and make sure the fieldwork had been completed correctly.

The overall target for the survey was to interview between 15 and 20 per cent of the UK-domiciled final year student population at each of the universities in the study. In total, the survey included face-to-face interviews with 12,658 finalists, a sample of 20.8 per cent (see *Table 1.1*).

Throughout this report, universities are identified just by their town or city name, except for the four London colleges, which are listed separately.

**Table 1.1 Final Year Students Interviewed for the University Tuition Fees Research**

|                            | Number of finalists interviewed for the survey | Estimated number of UK-domiciled finalists at university | % of finalists interviewed for research |                           | Number of finalists interviewed for the survey | Estimated number of UK-domiciled finalists at university | % of finalists interviewed for research |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Aston                      | 332  | 1,335  | 24.9                                    | London University College | 529  | 2,135  | 24.8                                    |
| Bath                       | 312  | 1,715  | 18.2                                    | Loughborough              | 585  | 2,855  | 20.5                                    |
| Birmingham                 | 892  | 3,440  | 25.9                                    | Manchester                | 772  | 4,790  | 16.1                                    |
| Bristol                    | 638  | 2,625  | 24.3                                    | Newcastle                 | 599  | 2,635  | 22.7                                    |
| Cambridge                  | 629  | 2,580  | 24.4                                    | Nottingham                | 814  | 3,835  | 21.2                                    |
| Durham                     | 576  | 2,935  | 19.6                                    | Oxford                    | 539  | 2,640  | 20.4                                    |
| Exeter                     | 645  | 2,680  | 24.1                                    | Reading                   | 441  | 2,390  | 18.5                                    |
| Lancaster                  | 568  | 1,980  | 28.7                                    | Sheffield                 | 595  | 3,250  | 18.3                                    |
| Leeds                      | 888  | 5,010  | 17.7                                    | Southampton               | 491  | 2,835  | 17.3                                    |
| Liverpool                  | 424  | 2,080  | 20.4                                    | Warwick                   | 475  | 2,360  | 20.1                                    |
| London Imperial College    | 187  | 965  | 19.4                                    | York                      | 319  | 2,025  | 15.8                                    |
| London King's College      | 249  | 1,205  | 20.7                                    |                           |  |  |   |
| London School of Economics | 159  | 675  | 23.6                                    | <b>SURVEY TOTAL</b>       | <b>12,658</b>                                  | <b>60,975</b>  | <b>20.8</b>                             |

## Chapter 2

# Students Views' on University Tuition Fees



GETTY IMAGES

### Background

In October 2010, Lord Brown's independent review of higher education funding & student finance at universities in England recommended that the current cap on tuition fees of £3,290 a year be lifted and that universities should be able to charge unlimited fees for undergraduate courses in future. Following publication of the review, the coalition Government proposed that universities should be able to charge fees of between £6,000 and £9,000 per year for their undergraduate courses.

The proposals provoked widespread protests from students and school-leavers opposed to any rise in fees, but in early December 2010 MPs approved the proposals and higher tuition fees are expected to be charged from autumn 2012 onwards. As with the existing fees, undergraduates will not pay up front for their degree courses, but will be given loans to cover the fees and will be expected to begin repaying the loans when their annual income reaches a minimum level. For current students this is set at £15,000 per annum, but under the new fees arrangements it is set to increase to £21,000.

Given the considerable debate about the new tuition fees in recent months, **High Fliers Research** included questions about students' views on the new rates in its latest survey of final year undergraduates. Because today's finalists, soon-to-be the graduates of 2011, are already used to contributing to the cost of their degrees, the research deliberately avoided asking whether they 'supported' or 'approved' of the proposed fees – few students were likely to be keen on higher charges for their education – and instead focused on whether the new fee levels would have deterred them from going to university.

The research, therefore, provides a unique insight as to whether current undergraduates – those who are close to finishing university and can see the value of their degrees in the graduate employment market – consider the new fees of £6,000 or £9,000 per annum as a worthwhile investment.

## Finalists' Views on Increased Tuition Fees

For the *University Tuition Fees and the Graduates of 2011* research, final year undergraduates studying at twenty-four leading universities in England and who lived in the UK were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statements - "I wouldn't have come to university if my tuition fees had been £6,000" and "I wouldn't have come to university if my tuition fees had been £9,000".

The results show that a third of students questioned for the research would not have come to university if their tuition fees had been £6,000 per annum (see *Chart 2.3*) – the lower level that the Government has suggested that fees could be increased to. One in ten finalists said they 'strongly agreed' that they wouldn't have come to university if their tuition fees had been set at this rate and a further 22 per cent agreed that they would not have begun a degree if their tuition fees had been £6,000. But more than half of finalists 'disagreed' that fees at this level would have deterred them from going to university and a sixth of finalists 'strongly disagreed'.

A much larger proportion of final year students said that tuition fees of £9,000 per annum would have put them off doing a degree. In all, some 51 per cent of undergraduates questioned either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they wouldn't have come to university if their tuition fees had been at this level. Only 12 per cent of finalists 'strongly disagreed' that this higher rate of fees would have discouraged them from studying for a degree. At six universities – Loughborough, Sheffield, Lancaster, Liverpool and Reading – more than 60 per cent of finalists said they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that tuition fees of £9,000 would have meant they wouldn't have come to university (see *Table 2.2*).

It is interesting to compare this strength of feeling with students' views on the original introduction of £3,000 per year fees five years ago – a similar poll conducted in 2006 by High Fliers Research showed that more than a third of that year's finalists wouldn't have gone to university if they'd had to pay tuition fees of £3,000 per annum (see *Chart 2.4*).

**Table 2.1 Finalists who wouldn't have come to University if Tuition Fees had been £6,000**

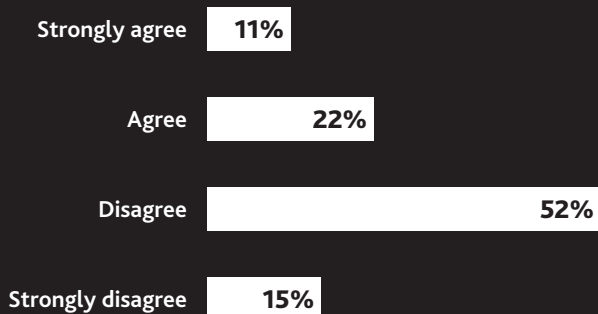
|                            | % of UK finalists |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Liverpool                  | 48                |
| Loughborough               | 46                |
| Lancaster                  | 44                |
| Sheffield                  | 44                |
| Aston                      | 43                |
| Reading                    | 41                |
| Manchester                 | 40                |
| Leeds                      | 39                |
| Birmingham                 | 38                |
| Nottingham                 | 35                |
| Bath                       | 33                |
| Southampton                | 33                |
| London King's College      | 32                |
| Newcastle                  | 32                |
| Exeter                     | 31                |
| London School of Economics | 30                |
| York                       | 29                |
| Warwick                    | 28                |
| London University College  | 25                |
| Bristol                    | 23                |
| London Imperial College    | 23                |
| Durham                     | 19                |
| Cambridge                  | 14                |
| Oxford                     | 12                |
| <b>SURVEY AVERAGE</b>      | <b>33</b>         |

**Table 2.2 Finalists who wouldn't have come to University if Tuition Fees had been £9,000**

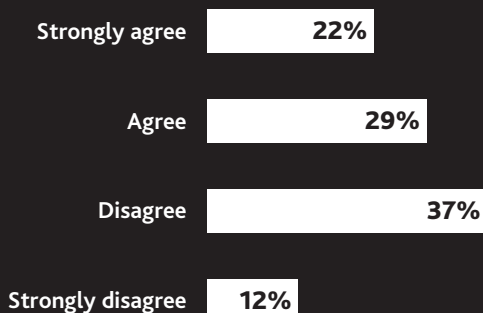
|                            | % of UK finalists |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Loughborough               | 67                |
| Sheffield                  | 66                |
| Lancaster                  | 65                |
| Liverpool                  | 65                |
| Reading                    | 63                |
| Leeds                      | 59                |
| Manchester                 | 58                |
| Southampton                | 58                |
| Aston                      | 57                |
| Birmingham                 | 56                |
| Newcastle                  | 55                |
| Nottingham                 | 54                |
| Exeter                     | 51                |
| Bath                       | 50                |
| Warwick                    | 47                |
| London King's College      | 46                |
| York                       | 44                |
| Bristol                    | 41                |
| London School of Economics | 41                |
| London University College  | 39                |
| Durham                     | 38                |
| London Imperial College    | 31                |
| Cambridge                  | 27                |
| Oxford                     | 25                |
| <b>SURVEY AVERAGE</b>      | <b>51</b>         |

**Chart 2.3 Finalists' Views on Proposals for Increased Tuition Fees in 2011**

*I wouldn't have come to university if my tuition fees had been £6,000 per annum*



*I wouldn't have come to university if my tuition fees had been £9,000 per annum*

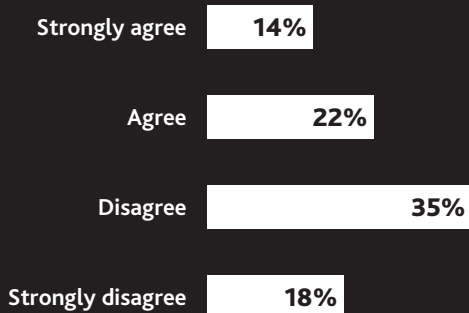


Percentage of UK-domiciled finalists at universities in England

Base - Face-to-face interviews with 12,658 final year students

**Chart 2.4 Finalists' Views on Proposals for New Tuition Fees of £3,000 in 2006**

*I wouldn't have come to university if my tuition fees had been £3,000*



Don't know 11%



Percentage of finalists from the 'Class of 2006'

Base - Face-to-face interviews with 16,452 final year students

## Analysis of Finalists' Views on £9,000 Tuition Fees

In order to analyse final year undergraduates' views on the introduction of increased tuition fees, the research included a number of background questions to identify students' gender, ethnicity, degree subject studied, school attended before university, home region, A-level results, their likely career destination, expected graduate earnings and their predicted graduation debt (see *Table 2.5*).

The results show that a noticeably higher proportion of women finalists than men said they would not have gone to university if their tuition fees had been the maximum new permitted rate of £9,000 per annum. Those living in the north of England were the most-likely to be put off doing a degree by the increased tuition fees. Fewer than two-fifths of students who went to fee-paying schools said these higher fees would have discouraged them from attending university, compared with almost three-fifths of those from state schools or colleges. And nearly two-thirds of students with three grade B's or less at A-level agreed they would not have started a degree if their course charged £9,000 tuition fees.

Final year students who had applied for graduate jobs in teaching were the most likely to be concerned about paying increased tuition fees – more than three-fifths of would-be teachers agreed that they would not have started university if their tuition fees had been £9,000 a year. And at least half of those planning to work in engineering, information technology and science, research & development – key skills areas where employers currently struggle to recruit sufficient numbers of qualified graduates – would not have done their degrees if tuition fees had been charged at this maximum level.

Under the new tuition fees regime, graduates will not have to start re-paying their fees until they are earning at least £21,000, but the research with the 'Class of 2011' shows that students who expect to be the lowest-earners after graduation are the individuals most-likely to be put off university by higher fees. At least three-fifths of finalists who anticipate earning £20,000 or less after completing their degrees said they wouldn't have started their course if tuition fees had been £9,000 per annum.

**Table 2.5 Analysis of "I wouldn't have come to university if my tuition fees had been £9,000pa"**

|                            | Strongly Agree<br>% | Agree<br>% | Disagree<br>% | Strongly Disagree<br>% |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Aston                      | 28                  | 29         | 33            | 10                     |
| Bath                       | 16                  | 34         | 38            | 12                     |
| Birmingham                 | 26                  | 30         | 36            | 8                      |
| Bristol                    | 12                  | 29         | 48            | 11                     |
| Cambridge                  | 8                   | 19         | 52            | 21                     |
| Durham                     | 12                  | 26         | 47            | 15                     |
| Exeter                     | 23                  | 28         | 40            | 9                      |
| Lancaster                  | 31                  | 34         | 28            | 7                      |
| Leeds                      | 27                  | 32         | 32            | 9                      |
| Liverpool                  | 34                  | 31         | 26            | 9                      |
| London Imperial College    | 15                  | 16         | 42            | 27                     |
| London King's College      | 21                  | 25         | 38            | 16                     |
| London School of Economics | 15                  | 26         | 34            | 25                     |
| London University College  | 16                  | 23         | 42            | 19                     |
| Loughborough               | 33                  | 34         | 27            | 6                      |
| Manchester                 | 29                  | 29         | 31            | 11                     |
| Newcastle                  | 21                  | 34         | 36            | 9                      |
| Nottingham                 | 22                  | 32         | 34            | 12                     |
| Oxford                     | 9                   | 16         | 49            | 26                     |
| Reading                    | 28                  | 35         | 29            | 8                      |
| Sheffield                  | 31                  | 35         | 27            | 7                      |
| Southampton                | 23                  | 35         | 34            | 8                      |
| Warwick                    | 18                  | 29         | 35            | 18                     |
| York                       | 18                  | 26         | 41            | 15                     |

Base - Face-to-face interviews with 12,658 final year students

**Table 2.5 Analysis of “I wouldn’t have come to come to university if my tuition fees had been £9,000pa”**

|  | Strongly Agree<br>% | Agree<br>% | Disagree<br>% | Strongly Disagree<br>% | Survey<br>Sample |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Finalists' Gender &amp; Ethnic Background</i>                   |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>Male</b>  | 19                  | 27         | 38            | 16                     | 5,934            |
| <b>Female</b>  | 25                  | 31         | 35            | 9                      | 6,545            |
| <b>Ethnic Minorities</b>   | 19                  | 27         | 36            | 18                     | 2,106            |
| <i>Home Region Before University</i>                               |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>London</b>  | 19                  | 27         | 39            | 15                     | 2,579            |
| <b>South East</b>  | 19                  | 29         | 40            | 12                     | 2,469            |
| <b>South West</b>  | 20                  | 31         | 37            | 12                     | 1,315            |
| <b>The Midlands</b>  | 25                  | 29         | 35            | 11                     | 1,999            |
| <b>East Anglia</b>   | 23                  | 28         | 35            | 14                     | 801              |
| <b>North West</b>  | 28                  | 30         | 31            | 11                     | 1,521            |
| <b>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</b>                                      | 25                  | 31         | 32            | 12                     | 891              |
| <b>North East</b>  | 25                  | 31         | 34            | 10                     | 408              |
| <i>Schools Attended Before University</i>                          |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>State school or college</b>                                     | 27                  | 32         | 32            | 9                      | 6,598            |
| <b>Grammar school</b>  | 21                  | 30         | 36            | 13                     | 2,060            |
| <b>Fee-paying school</b>   | 14                  | 25         | 44            | 17                     | 3,726            |
| <i>A-Level Grades Attained</i>                                     |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>Grades 'AAAA' or better</b>                                     | 15                  | 25         | 43            | 17                     | 3,188            |
| <b>Grades 'AAA'</b>  | 24                  | 30         | 36            | 10                     | 1,455            |
| <b>Grades 'BBB' or less</b>  | 31                  | 32         | 28            | 9                      | 1,196            |
| <i>Degree Subjects Studied</i>                                     |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>Arts &amp; Humanities</b>                                       | 23                  | 31         | 36            | 10                     | 2,949            |
| <b>Business &amp; Finance</b>                                      | 23                  | 32         | 33            | 12                     | 1,121            |
| <b>Computing &amp; IT</b>  | 27                  | 27         | 32            | 14                     | 195              |
| <b>Engineering</b>   | 19                  | 31         | 35            | 15                     | 1,028            |
| <b>Languages</b>   | 27                  | 30         | 36            | 7                      | 738              |
| <b>Law</b>   | 20                  | 25         | 39            | 16                     | 689              |
| <b>Science</b>   | 22                  | 28         | 38            | 12                     | 2,509            |
| <b>Social Sciences</b>   | 20                  | 29         | 37            | 14                     | 2,739            |
| <i>Finalists' Expected Graduation Debt</i>                         |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>£10,000 or less</b>   | 15                  | 25         | 43            | 17                     | 2,855            |
| <b>£10,001 to £20,000</b>  | 24                  | 30         | 36            | 10                     | 5,063            |
| <b>More than £20,000</b>   | 31                  | 32         | 28            | 9                      | 4,584            |
| <i>Finalists who'd Applied for Graduate Jobs in Career Sectors</i> |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>Accountancy</b>   | 15                  | 29         | 39            | 17                     | 1,297            |
| <b>Charity &amp; Voluntary Sector</b>                              | 25                  | 34         | 33            | 8                      | 1,435            |
| <b>Engineering</b>   | 20                  | 31         | 36            | 13                     | 972              |
| <b>Human Resources</b>   | 29                  | 32         | 31            | 8                      | 883              |
| <b>Investment Banking</b>  | 12                  | 23         | 40            | 25                     | 1,378            |
| <b>IT</b>  | 26                  | 25         | 34            | 15                     | 435              |
| <b>Law</b>   | 17                  | 22         | 41            | 20                     | 1,132            |
| <b>Marketing</b>   | 24                  | 30         | 36            | 10                     | 1,847            |
| <b>Media</b>   | 25                  | 30         | 36            | 9                      | 1,922            |
| <b>Public Sector</b>   | 25                  | 29         | 36            | 10                     | 1,966            |
| <b>Retailing</b>   | 27                  | 32         | 33            | 8                      | 861              |
| <b>Science, Research &amp; Development</b>                         | 22                  | 30         | 37            | 11                     | 1,292            |
| <b>Teaching</b>  | 28                  | 34         | 31            | 7                      | 1,831            |
| <b>Finalists who've secured a graduate job</b>                     | 15                  | 23         | 41            | 20                     | 1,393            |
| <i>Finalists' Expected Graduate Starting Salary</i>                |                     |            |               |                        |                  |
| <b>Less than £15,000</b>   | 30                  | 31         | 31            | 8                      | 750              |
| <b>£15,000 to £19,999</b>  | 26                  | 34         | 33            | 7                      | 2,478            |
| <b>£20,000 to £24,999</b>  | 22                  | 31         | 36            | 11                     | 3,248            |
| <b>£25,000 to £29,999</b>  | 16                  | 23         | 43            | 18                     | 1,453            |
| <b>£30,000 or more</b>   | 10                  | 19         | 44            | 27                     | 1,133            |

Base - Face-to-face interviews with 12,658 final year students

## Conclusions

**This research confirms that a significant proportion of current final year undergraduates at the leading universities in England would not have begun their degrees if tuition fees had been between £6,000 and £9,000 per annum:**

- Over half of final year students at twenty-four universities in England say they would not have come to university if their tuition fees had been £9,000 per annum, the level that most top universities are expected to charge from 2012 onwards, and a third would have been put off doing a degree by fees of £6,000 per annum.
- More than three-fifths of finalists at Loughborough, Sheffield, Lancaster, Liverpool and Reading universities say they would not have started their degrees if fees had been £9,000; students at Oxford and Cambridge were the least concerned by fees at this level.
- Female undergraduates, those with three Grade B's or less at A-level, those studying languages or arts & humanities subjects, and students whose home region is in north west England, Yorkshire or Humberside, or the north east of England are the most-likely to be deterred by tuition fees of £9,000 per annum.
- Almost two-thirds of finalists with current student debts of more than £20,000 say they wouldn't have come to university if their annual tuition fees had been £9,000. The average debt for graduates leaving university in 2011 is expected to be £17,500.
- Students who attended a state school or college before university are much more likely to be put off going to university by fees of £9,000 a year, than students from private schools.
- More than half of finalists who plan to work in engineering, information technology and science, research & development – key skills areas where employers currently struggle to recruit sufficient numbers of suitably-qualified graduates – would not have done their degrees if tuition fees had been charged at £9,000 per annum.
- Final year students planning to work in investment banking after university are the least concerned about paying higher tuition fees.
- At least three-fifths of final year students who think they'll earn a graduate salary of £20,000 or less when they begin work wouldn't have come to university at all if their tuition fees had been £9,000 a year. Graduates from the 'Class of 2011' expect to earn an average of £22,100.