



Press Release Strictly embargoed until 00.01hrs Thursday 12th June 2014

New research shows final year university students' confidence in the graduate job market is at its highest for more than a decade

As graduation ceremonies get under way at universities around the UK, a major new survey of the career plans of more than 18,000 final year students from the 'Class of 2014' (to be published on **Thursday 12th June 2014**) reveals that the proportion of university-leavers expecting to start a graduate job after their degree is at its highest level for 12 years and that a record number of new graduates have already secured job offers from employers before leaving university.

The UK Graduate Careers Survey 2014 was conducted by **High Fliers Research**, an independent research company that specialises in researching the graduate employment market. The survey was based on face-to-face interviews with **18,336 final year students** from thirty leading UK universities, completed on campus in March 2014. This sample includes a **fifth** of the finalists due to graduate from these universities this summer.

The research confirms that this year's new graduates began looking for jobs earlier than ever before and have made an unprecedented number of job applications to employers. The survey also shows that the number of students who have completed work experience whilst at university has increased by more than half over the last five years.

The key findings from *The UK Graduate Careers Survey 2014* about the 'Class of 2014' are:

- The percentage of final year students from the UK's leading universities expected to start a **full-time graduate job** straight after university has increased to **25%**, the highest proportion since 2002. A further 17% said they would be looking for a graduate job once they had completed their studies and 3% planned to run their own business.
- **Postgraduate study** and **travel** remain popular alternatives to employment for new graduates, with 24% of final year students hoping to go on to further study and 14% planning to take time off or go travelling after graduation.
- Three-quarters of this year's graduates began researching their career options **before the start of their last year at university**, the highest proportion ever recorded by *The UK Graduate Careers Survey*. By comparison, just 57% of those graduating in 2008, 61% of finalists in 2010 and 64% of university-leavers in 2012 started looking for a graduate job before their final year of studies.

- **41%** of finalists from the ‘Class of 2014’ had done an **internship or other vacation work** with a graduate employer whilst at university, the fourth consecutive year that participation in work experience has risen – only 26% of final year students who graduated in 2010 had completed internships or work placements.
- A **record 43%** of this year’s finalists made job applications to graduate employers almost a year before graduation – applying for graduate vacancies in September or October at the beginning of their final year at university. A total of 62% of finalists had made graduate job applications by March of this year.
- The average number of graduate job applications made by finalists has increased from 5.7 applications per student in 2009-2010 and 6.9 applications per student in 2011-2012 to an all-time high of **7.5 applications per student** in 2013-2014. In total, students at the thirty universities included in the survey have made an estimated **463,000 job applications** this year, up from 360,000 in 2012 and 257,000 in 2010 – an increase of more than 75% in five years.
- A **quarter** of final year students who’d made graduate job applications by the time the survey took place in March had received **definite job offers from graduate employers**, the highest percentage reported by *The UK Graduate Careers Survey* since its launch in 1995. This is the fourth year running that the success rate for applications has increased – 22% of applicants for graduate jobs received offers in 2013, compared with 16% in 2011 and 13% in 2009.
- For the third year running, **marketing** is the most popular destination for new graduates, ahead of jobs in **consulting**, the **media** and **teaching**.
- **London** remains the **preferred employment destination** for final year students at 27 out of the 30 universities included in the survey, with 50% of all student job hunters hoping to work in the capital after graduation.
- The average expected **starting salary** for new graduates has risen to **£23,000**, only the second time since the beginning of the recession that expectations have increased. But on average, this year’s university-leavers anticipate earning just £300 more than the ‘Class of 2008’ expected six years ago.
- More than half of students who left their graduate job search until the final year of their studies were unsure what they could do after university and realised **they should have started job hunting earlier**.

Managing director of High Fliers Research, **Martin Birchall** commented:

“Our latest research confirms just how dramatically the process of getting a graduate job has changed over the last five years.

Finding a first graduate job for after university is no longer something that students do in their final few months of study – nearly half of those graduating this summer from the ‘Class of 2014’ had started researching their career options by the end of their first year at university and record numbers of students made their job applications to employers up to a year before graduation.

It’s great to see that although the job market for university-leavers remains highly competitive, more new graduates than ever have managed to secure a definite job offer before leaving university.”

Notes to Editors:

1. *The UK Graduate Careers Survey* has been produced annually since 1995 by **High Fliers Research**, the independent research company that specialises in researching graduate recruitment at the UK's leading universities. The company also conducts regular surveys of the country's top graduate employers, recording the latest starting salaries, graduate vacancy levels and recruitment practices.
2. The **thirty universities** included in the survey in 2014 were: Aston, Bath, Belfast Queen's University, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, London Imperial College, London King's College, London School of Economics, London University College, Loughborough, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton, St Andrews, Strathclyde, Warwick and York.
3. The **graduate employers** and **professional associations** who funded the research programme in 2013-2014 are: ACCA, Accenture, Airbus, Aldi, American Express, Army, Arup, Atos, Aviva, AXA, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Barclays, BDO, Bloomberg, BP, BT, British Airways, British Sugar, Capgemini, Capital One, Centrica, CIMA, Citi, Civil Service, Credit Suisse, Danone, Deloitte, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, E.ON, EY, Fidelity Worldwide Investment, Frontline, GlaxoSmithKline, HSBC, IBM, Institute of Actuaries, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ICAEW), Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), Jaguar Land Rover, J.P. Morgan, KPMG, Lidl, Lloyds Banking Group, Mars, Microsoft, Morrisons, National College for Teaching & Leadership, NHS, nucleargraduates, Oliver Wyman, PwC, Rolls-Royce, RBS Group, Royal Navy, Sainsbury's, Shell, Siemens, Sky, Teach First, Telefónica, Tesco, Transport for London, Toyota and Unilever.
4. **Martin Birchall**, Managing Director of High Fliers Research is available for interview.
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