



Press Release Released Wednesday 12th July 2017

New research shows fewer graduates from the 'Class of 2017' want to work for the City's top investment banks because of Brexit job market fears

With graduation ceremonies under way at universities around the UK, a major survey of the career plans of more than 20,000 new graduates from the 'Class of 2017' shows that almost three-quarters believe there will be fewer jobs for those leaving university this summer because of last year's Brexit vote, and that the number of new graduates applying to work in investment banking and finance has dropped by up to a fifth in the last 12 months.

The UK Graduate Careers Survey 2017 (to be published on Wednesday 12th July) 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 20,102 final year students from thirty leading UK universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester & Birmingham, completed on campus in February 2017.

The survey confirms that confidence in the graduate job market has dipped for the first time in five years and that an increased proportion of final year students are planning to remain at university for further study, rather than begin a graduate job at the end of their degree.

The research also highlights that new graduates' average student debt is now a record £37,700 on graduation, even though one in eight students had their university tuition fees paid for by their parents and three-fifths received parental support with their living costs during their studies.

The key findings from **The UK Graduate Careers Survey 2017** about the 'Class of 2017' are:

- Following last summer's vote for the UK to leave the European Union, **confidence in the graduate job market** has **worsened** for the first time in five years, with almost three-quarters of final year students fearing that there will be fewer opportunities for new graduates in 2017, as a direct result of the vote.
- A total of **42%** of finalists from the 'Class of 2017' either expect to **begin a graduate job** after graduation or will spend the summer looking for their first job, two per cent fewer than last year.
- The number of finalists intending to remain at university to do a **postgraduate course** has risen to **26%**, the first time in seven years that applications for further study have increased.
- Fewer students expect to take **temporary** or other non-graduate work after completing their degrees, but more finalists have '**no definite plans**' for life beyond university. One in eight are hoping to **take time off or go travelling** after graduation and 3% plan to work for themselves.

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- A total of **71%** of finalists made job applications during the 2016-2017 graduate recruitment season, four per cent less than the previous year.
- For the third year running, **consulting** is the top destination for new graduates, ahead of entry-level opportunities in **marketing**, the **media** and **research & development**.
- But the number of finalists applying to work in **investment banking**, **finance** and **accountancy** has dropped by up to a fifth, and the volume of applicants for **teaching** fell for the fifth consecutive year.
- A third of the ‘Class of 2017’ had received a graduate job offer by late February in their final year – either from an employer they had completed work experience with, or through the job applications they had made during their final year at university.
- The **average starting salary** that final year students expect to earn as new graduates has **risen to £24,300**, a modest increase of £200 from 2016 and the smallest annual rise for four years.
- Salaries that finalists expect to be paid five years after leaving university have also increased, to an average of **£43,200**, and a sixth of finalists believe they will be earning **£100,000 or more** by the age of 30.
- **London** is again the **preferred employment destination** for new graduates – almost half of all job hunters hope to work in the capital – and it is now the first choice for finalists at 26 out of the 30 universities included in the survey.
- Nearly **half** of all final year students had either done course placements, internships, or vacation work with graduate employers whilst at university, completing an average of more than **six months** work experience. But the number of finalists who had done **casual vacation work** or had **part-time jobs during term-time** dropped to their lowest levels ever.
- UK finalists’ expected graduation debt has increased to its highest level ever, an average of **£37,700** per graduate, even though **three-fifths** of finalists have had **financial support from their parents** whilst at university, either with their tuition fees or student living costs.

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

“Our latest survey shows just how quickly the impact of last year’s Brexit vote has been felt by university students, 92% of whom voted to ‘remain’ in the EU.

Despite many of the country’s best-known employers maintaining a ‘business as usual’ approach to graduate recruitment this year, almost three-quarters of the ‘Class of 2017’ leaving university this summer fear that there will be fewer graduate jobs available as a direct result of the uncertainty caused by Brexit.

Even with parental support for university tuition fees and living costs, students now face record graduation debts of £37,700, so the pressure to secure a well-paid graduate job after university has never been greater.”

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 2017 were: Aston, Bath, Belfast Queen's University, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London Imperial College, London King's College, London School of Economics, London University College, Loughborough, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield, Southampton, St Andrews, Strathclyde, Warwick and York.
3. The sixty **graduate employers** and **professional associations** who commissioned the research programme in 2016-2017 include Accenture, Aldi, American Express, Arcadis, Atos, Aviva, Barclays, BDO, Bloomberg, BP, British Army, BT, Capital One, CIMA, Civil Service Fast Stream, Danone, Deloitte, DHL, Diageo, Dyson, ExxonMobil, EY, Fidelity International, Frontline, FTI Consulting, Grant Thornton, GSK, HSBC, IBM, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), Jaguar Land Rover, KPMG, L'Oréal, Lidl, Lloyds Banking Group, Mars, Microsoft, National Audit Office, National College for Teaching & Leadership (NCTL), Network Rail, Newton Europe, NHS, nucleargraduates, Police Now, PwC, RBC Capital Markets, RBS, Rolls-Royce, Royal Navy, Shell, Siemens, Teach First, Think Ahead, Unilever, Unlocked and Vodafone.
4. **Martin Birchall**, Managing Director of High Fliers Research is available for interview.
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