

Career Countdown: exploring how students and recent graduates are feeling about taking their next steps: a survey on behalf of Get Into Teaching

Introduction

Kindred Agency commissioned research company Censuswide to carry out a survey on behalf of the *Get Into Teaching* campaign exploring the views of final year university students and recent graduates (from the last three years) in England. The purpose of the survey was to explore how today's higher education cohort feel when it comes to making decisions about their future career and what factors are influencing them.

Findings from the survey were used to inform campaign development and marketing, in particular public relations activity to position teaching as an opportunity for those looking for a fulfilling and rewarding career option. Press releases based on the main survey findings were proactively shared with target national and regional media for publication. These releases included information about how those considering a career in teaching can find out more.

Methodology

The research was conducted by Censuswide in accordance with the [MRS Code of Conduct \(2019\)](#) between 1st June and 14th June 2022. The aim was to gain a sample of 2,000 people in England (18+) who are current final year university students and those who have graduated within the last three years, excluding teachers and trainee teachers. The final response was 2,057. Respondents were asked a set of single answer and multi-answer questions. All responses were gathered using an online survey and individuals were recruited via a random and anonymous sample selection, from an online "double opt-in" panel (where all eligible respondents are required to answer the demographic screening questions again to take part in the survey) of the specified student and graduate sample in England.

The Censuswide panel was originally recruited via sampling specialists and since has grown organically. Panellists can opt to answer all surveys but will be filtered out if a survey is not relevant to them. Panellists are also invited to participate in surveys via a newsletter. Censuswide employs members of the [Market Research Society](#) and its research activity abides by the [ESOMAR](#) principles. The way these surveys were built meant that respondents were asked a number of preliminary screening questions to ensure the correct sample was targeted and other demographic questions, which were used to analyse the data. This demographic data included age group, gender, work status, city and region.

Questions were based on a range of topics and themes including:

- Whether respondents feel anxious or overwhelmed about making the "right" career decision and how they will know when they have.
- The range of options open to this cohort and the extent to which they feel they should future-proof their careers
- The factors that are influencing people the most when trying to make career decisions
- The extent to which this group is taking into account the views of others when considering their options
- What they think they would gain from teaching and whether they would consider discussing it with teachers in their network

In the survey, we are working with a 3.09% margin of error (and a 95% confidence interval), which means that if the research were to be repeated, we would expect the percentages to differ no more than 3% either way from the current results data.

Summary findings

Respondents were asked to extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "*I feel anxious about getting it right when it comes to making a decision about what my future career should be*": 39% said strongly agree, 44% said somewhat agree, 11% said neither agree nor disagree, 4% said somewhat disagree, and 2% said strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked, when considering your future career options, which of the following options apply to you the most: 39% said *I am searching for roles in sectors which offer job security/stability*; 33% said *I am seeking a role within those sectors that have shown their value and resilience throughout the pandemic*; 26% said *I am going into post-graduate education*; 25% said *I am reconsidering my original career plan, as it is a sector/industry that hasn't been performing well since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic*; 22% said *I am looking at sectors/roles that have inspired me during the Covid-19 pandemic response*; 13% said *I'm going to take some time out/go travelling first*; 13% said *I am reconsidering my original career plan because I am not enjoying it/it has not turned out how I expected it to*; and 5% said *none of the above*.

Asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "*Given the number of graduate career options that exist, at times I have felt overwhelmed and unable to make a definitive decision*": 26% said strongly agree, 46% said somewhat agree, 16% said neither agree nor disagree, 9% said somewhat disagree, and 3% said strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked what factors, if any, have influenced you thinking the most when trying to make a decision about you future career path [choosing up to five]: 45% said *choosing a career that will allow me to have a sense of pride in what I do*; 44% said *wanting a stable salary/financial security*; 41% said *the amount of graduate career options that now exist to choose from*; 35% said *choosing a career that aligns with my interests and passions*; 31% said *wanting an opportunity to make a difference in society*; 26% said *people's reaction when I tell them what I have chosen as my career path*; 25% said *reports in the media about the general economic outlook/jobs market*; 22% said *impressing my followers on social media when I reveal the career I have decided on*; 14% said *how long I see myself following this career path*; and 2% said *no factors have influenced me*. Less than 1% said "other".

Respondents were asked, when it comes to deciding on your future career path, which of the following, if any, are the most helpful to make what you feel is the right decision [choosing up to three]: 46% said *I consult family and friends*; 40% said *I seek out expert advice from career advisors, recruiters, etc*; 37% said *I seek out advice from former teachers, mentors, tutors, etc*; 36% said *the role/career must be in line with my values*; 32% said *gut instinct*; 13% said *hearing what my friends are going on to do*; 7% said *seeing what people my age on social media are doing*; and 2% said *none of the above*.

When asked which of the following, if any, apply/applied to you the most when you are/were thinking about your future career path [choosing up to five]: 49% said *I weigh up if the career I am considering will allow me the lifestyle/financial freedom that I want*; 45% said *I think about whether the career I am considering will give me a sense of purpose*; 34% said *I wonder if the organisation will have a dynamic working environment*; 31% said *I wonder if my future employer will have suitable sustainable practices*; 28% said *I worry I'll regret my decision and need to make a career switch*; 28% said *I think about whether I'll feel at home in my new work setting and have a sense of belonging and community*; 27% said *I consider whether I see myself having this career for a long time*; 22% said *I worry what my friends/family/peers will think of the career I am keen to explore/embark on*; 10% said *I wonder if I'll be able to work anywhere*; and 2% said *none of the above*.

Asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“When considering my career options and aspirations, I take into account how I think other people will react to my choices when I tell them”*: 19% said strongly agree, 41% said somewhat agree, 21% said neither agree nor disagree, 13% said somewhat disagree, and 6% said strongly disagree.

Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“I know I’ll have found the right career path when it combines my passion for a topic and the opportunity to make an impact”*: 34% said strongly agree, 47% said somewhat agree, 14% said neither agree nor disagree, 4% said somewhat disagree, and 1% said strongly disagree. Asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“I feel I ought to future proof my career prospects by searching in an established or growing sector where my subject knowledge and skills are in demand”*: 24% said strongly agree, 48% said somewhat agree, 21% said neither agree nor disagree, 5% said somewhat disagree, and 2% said strongly disagree.

Respondents were then asked, if you were to consider teaching as a career, what do you think you would gain from the profession, if anything [choosing up to five]: 48% said *knowing your job is helping to positively shape the lives of others and your own*; 42% said *a sense of purpose – doing something important that matters*; 40% said *knowing you'll make a difference and have a lasting impact*; 37% said *the feeling of being valued and trusted*; 36% said *a career where I'll be able to use my knowledge and passion for a particular subject/area of interest to inspire others*; 35% said *a career that will offer me stability and clear progression opportunities*; 22% said *a sense of fun, joy and excitement*; 8% said *the opportunity to earn respect from my peers*; and 4% said *I would not gain anything* and less than 1% said *“other”*. On the same topic, respondents were asked if they wanted to find out more about teaching as a career would you consider discussing it with any of your former teachers, and/or local teachers from your area/network: 34% said *yes, definitely, I have teachers in mind I could speak with*; 27% said *yes, though I wouldn't know who to approach*; 26% said *“maybe”*; 9% said *“no”*; 4% said *“not sure”* and 1% said *“not applicable”*.

The city-based statistical variations report:

City-based data	Birmingham	Bradford	Brighton	Bristol	Hull	Leeds	Leicester	Liverpool	Manchester	Newcastle	Nottingham	Norwich	Oxford	Plymouth	Sheffield	Southampton
Number of respondents per city in the overall sample	225	61	50	94	56	114	52	73	210	111	87	52	55	50	69	71
Respondents who agree* they feel anxious about making the right decision when it comes to their future career	90%	66%	88%	87%	79%	88%	88%	93%	89%	90%	90%	85%	73%	72%	81%	80%
Respondents who agree* they ought to future-proof their career prospects by searching in an established or growing sector where their subject knowledge and skills are in demand	76%	56%	72%	72%	61%	60%	79%	75%	72%	75%	78%	73%	69%	72%	81%	65%
Respondents who* take into account how they think other people will react to their career decision	61%	54%	54%	54%	41%	61%	60%	51%	60%	58%	63%	58%	53%	64%	58%	51%
Respondents who believe teaching as a career would give them the knowledge that their job is helping to positively shape the lives of others and their own	49%	43%	48%	49%	43%	52%	58%	52%	50%	44%	46%	40%	44%	54%	45%	58%
Respondents who agree* that, at times, they have felt overwhelmed and unable to make a definitive	77%	64%	66%	73%	55%	71%	71%	68%	71%	63%	83%	79%	65%	64%	78%	62%

career decision, given the number of graduate career options that exist																
Respondents who are influenced in their career decision making by choosing a career that will allow them to have a sense of pride in what they do	50%	41%	58%	44%	45%	50%	62%	47%	50%	49%	40%	42%	36%	52%	58%	39%
Respondents who are influenced in their career decision making by wanting a stable salary/financial security	44%	31%	60%	50%	29%	54%	69%	48%	44%	45%	49%	46%	47%	34%	45%	42%
Respondents who agree* that they believe they will have found the right career path when it combines their passion for a topic and the opportunity to make an impact	83%	79%	86%	77%	63%	77%	88%	79%	83%	80%	86%	81%	64%	70%	78%	76%
Respondents who say** that to find out more about teaching as a career they would consider discussing it with their former teachers, and/or local teachers in their area/network	58%	47%	60%	59%	45%	65%	62%	62%	66%	58%	63%	65%	51%	64 65%	68%	49%

The regional statistical variations report:

Regional-based data	East of England	Greater London	East Midlands	West Midlands	North East	North West	South East	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber
<i>Number of respondents per region in the overall sample</i>	278	346	147	228	116	282	231	162	267
Respondents who agree* they feel anxious about making the right decision when it comes to their future career	72%	82%	90%	88%	90%	90%	81%	80%	81%
Respondents who agree* they ought to future-proof their career prospects by searching in an established or growing sector where their subject knowledge and skills are in demand	77%	73%	80%	73%	76%	74%	70%	72%	63%
Respondents who* take into account how they think other people will react to their career decision	71%	61%	57%	60%	57%	59%	53%	57%	55%
Respondents who believe teaching as a career would give them the knowledge that their job is helping to positively shape the lives of others and their own	44%	47%	54%	48%	46%	51%	49%	50%	46%
Respondents who agree* that, at times, they have felt overwhelmed and unable to make a definitive career decision, given the number of graduate career options that exist	74%	75%	78%	75%	64%	71%	69%	69%	68%
Respondents who are influenced in their career decision making by choosing a career that will allow them to have a sense of pride in what they do	33%	42%	52%	48%	48%	50%	45%	49%	50%

Respondents who are influenced in their career decision making by wanting a stable salary/financial security	32%	43%	58%	43%	44%	46%	51%	42%	42%
Respondents who agree* that they believe they will have found the right career path when it combines their passion for a topic and the opportunity to make an impact	82%	82%	88%	81%	79%	82%	78%	75%	76%
Respondents who say** that to find out more about teaching as a career they would consider discussing it with their former teachers, and/or local teachers in their area/network	69%	60%	61%	60%	60%	65%	59%	57%	56%

* This finding combines respondents who said ‘strongly agree’ or ‘somewhat agree’

** This finding combines respondents who said ‘yes, definitely’ and ‘yes, though I wouldn’t know who to approach’