**Career Readiness - summary of recent research**

A selection and summary of relevant recent research and articles addressing:

* The impact of Careers Education, Advice and Guidance
* Factors affecting students' career thinking and decision-making
* What employers look for
* Labour Market Information and intelligence
* Curriculum design

**Careers Education, Advice and Guidance – impact**

* *The Graduate Success Project - AGCAS/AGR, BIS funded (2013).* Investigates graduates’ experiences at university; transitions to working life and understanding of career planning and choices, all in relation to demographics and educational backgrounds. It also contains an employer survey that gauges their expectations of graduates and their experiences of both engaging and recruiting graduates. Key findings include i) more embedding of career planning so that it is not seen as incompatible with academic studies and ii) 75% of employers surveyed believed that students using the careers service had a head start in the graduate jobs market. <https://www.agcas.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/f4e4e48d-d0d1-40ec-975e-f0347d190210>

\*A useful website aimed at students was also formed as a result of this project, including lots of case studies, videos and practical advice - <http://www.graduate-success.org.uk/>

* *Impact of careers education on graduate success – O'Riordan, R (2018)*. A HECSU funded practitioner research project at the University of Dundee, showing that participating in an optional credit-bearing careers education has a positive effect on graduates' destination outcomes and confidence levels about life after graduation. <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/impact-of-careers-education-on-graduate-success>
* *Careers education – are we preaching to the converted? – O'Riordan, R (2018)*. A HECSU funded practitioner research project at the University of Dundee explores the challenge that students choosing to take careers modules are highly motivated and would succeed anyway. By using other student engagement activity as a measure of motivation, the research maintains the finding that students taking a careers module were more confident about life after graduation - <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/careers-education-are-we-preaching-to-the-converted>
* *Who wins the rat race? Social justice and the graduate labour market – Hooley, Tristram (2015).* An article that presents the case for a serious injection of ethics and politics into careers guidance practice to help tackle inequalities in the graduate labour market - [https://derby.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10545/581890/who+wins+the+rat+race.pdf?sequence=1](https://derby.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10545/581890/who%2Bwins%2Bthe%2Brat%2Brace.pdf?sequence=1)

**Factors affecting student/graduate career thinking and decision making**

* *Futuretrack - Warwick Institute for Employment Research, funded by HECSU (2006-2012)*. A longitudinal study that followed the cohort of students who applied to university through UCAS in 2005/6. The project explores why students decide to apply to higher education and how they choose their institution and course. It also examines their attitudes to money, university careers services, extracurricular activities and unpaid work, and explores post-university experience of employment. Stage 4 focuses on transitions after university and there are also some insightful working papers resulting from findings on themes such as #2 ‘Job search strategies and employment preferences of higher education students’ and #4 ‘Final year students’ perceptions of the skills they have to offer and the skills employers seek’. <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/futuretrack/findings/>
* *Resources and Readiness: the graduate capital perspective as a new approach to graduate employability – Tomlinson, M et al (20117).* This article outlines a graduate capital model that develops a broad, holistic and conceptual understanding of graduate employability that includes five forms of capital (human, social, cultural, identity and psychological). These interact and their deployment plays a significant role in shaping graduates' transitional experiences and early employment outcomes. It suggests practical actions to enhance these forms of capital to help students engage in employability development and emerging career formation fairly early, to help ease the transition to graduate employment. <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/410997/>
* *Planning for success: Graduates' career planning and its effect on graduate outcomes – Shury, J. et al (2017)*. A study commissioned by the Department of Education that examines a cohort of students (75,000 from 27 institutions), who completed their full-time undergraduate study in 2011/12. It found that the three factors guiding graduates to a positive outcome were i) undertaking paid part time work experience whilst studying ii) focusing future job search exclusively on graduate level roles and applying early and iii) having a career plan upon leaving university (either a specific role or a good idea of the types of roles).
* *Uncertain transition: exploring the experience of recent graduates – Christie, Fiona (2018).* A HECSU funded practitioner research project at Salford University providing an insight into the early careers of arts, creative arts and humanities graduates, with a focus on those who experienced some difficulty/uncertainty in getting their career underway. It identifies issues they face, decision making styles and support needed. It also explores how social background and attitude can affect career attitudes.<https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-factors-contribute-to-a-successful-graduate-transition>
* *Why do some first year students not know how to start career planning despite wanting to? - Kerley, Laura (2018).* A HECSU funded practitioner qualitative research project focusing on hesitant students from three different Social Science and Humanities programmes. It explores students’ perceptions of career planning, work experience and careers/employability support; confidence levels; and the role of careers information. It suggests some practical actions to bust misperceptions and engage students earlier. <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/exploring-hesitant-students-perceptions-of-career-planning>
* *Student Resilience: Exploring the positive case for resilience - McIntosh, E., & Shaw, J. (2017).* Drawing on a survey of 6,500 students, thisargues that the development of resilience could be a key consideration in understanding student transitions, particularly across the first year of study and preparation for graduation. It recognizes the importance of both general and career planning, as well as goal setting in the positive development of student resilience. They also argue that the language used in student communications should be nuanced to reflect the key characteristics of resilience, so as to normalise uncertainty, risk taking and the importance of failure. <http://www.unite-group.co.uk/universities/student-resilience-exploring-positive-case-resilience>
* *Who wins the rat race? Social justice and the graduate labour market – Hooley, Tristram (2015).* An article that presents the case for a serious injection of ethics and politics into careers guidance practice to help tackle inequalities in the graduate labour market. [https://derby.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10545/581890/who+wins+the+rat+race.pdf?sequence=1](https://derby.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10545/581890/who%2Bwins%2Bthe%2Brat%2Brace.pdf?sequence=1) -

**What employers look for and recruitment/selection**

* *What employers want in a CV – Simkin, B and Coney, K (2019).* A HECSU funded practitioner research project. Findings include the importance of using appropriate key words and a growing preference for writing in the first person. <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-employers-want-in-a-cv>

**Labour Market Information and Intelligence**

* *What do graduates do? 2018/19.* It examines first-degree graduate destinations six months after graduation. The data is from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education* (DLHE) 2016/17 survey and is produced by Prospects and AGCAS on behalf of HECSU. It also includes a useful overview of the graduate labour market, insight articles and detailed subject overviews. <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>
* *The Graduate Market in 2019 - High Flyers Research (2018)* is a study of the latest graduate vacancies, student internships and work placements at the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers, conducted annually. It looks at the data for the preceding year and also makes predictions about the following year. Each section has a nifty summary - <https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>
* *Pay as you go? Internship pay, quality and access in the graduate jobs market - Cullinane, C and Montacute, R (Sutton Trust, 2018).* This report draws on a graduate and employer survey to analyse graduate internship pay, access and quality, offering recommendations on how we can ensure the best internships are open to all young people, regardless of their background. <https://www.suttontrust.com/research-paper/internships-pay-as-you-go/>
* *Current and future demand for digital skills: a call to action* – *Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (2019).*Two pieces of research examining current demand for digital skills in the UK job market, and looking at the digital skills needed to succeed now and in the next 10 years- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/current-and-future-demand-for-digital-skills-in-the-workplace>

**Curriculum Design**

* *What’s the best way to teach employability? - Standage, Helen (2018).* A HECSU funded practitioner research project surveying first year Sociology and Literature students who undertook a compulsory credit-bearing employability module. The Sociology students followed a generic module, whereas the Literature students followed a degree-specific approach. Findings were compared across four dependent measures: engagement, achievement, satisfaction and level of work experience. Although no statistically significant differences between the two student groups were found, follow up focus groups had a preference for practical learning and less appreciation for *intellectual* linkage to their subject. <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/whats-the-best-way-to-teach-employability>
* *How should universities teach employability? - Standage, Helen* *(2019).* A follow up of the above study, exploring what practical components within employability teaching are appreciated by students. Valued components included aspects of the labour market relevant to their degree, tips on recruitment and selection, and meeting professionals and employers, which gave them a 'real' insight into professional working life. Students also valued assignments being geared towards a live job/paid work experience. Who should teach it was less clear. <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/how-should-universities-teach-employability>

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