

# Half of this year's graduates contemplate further study

New research from Opinionpanel reveals that half of this year's crop of undergraduates are seriously considering postgraduate study as their next move.

The research is based on the findings of an online survey conducted during May with just over 1,000 full-time students at 133 universities (all of them members of 'The Student Panel', Opinionpanel's proprietary online panel).

It found that almost a quarter (24%) of final-year students had already applied to do postgraduate studies, and that a further quarter (26%) were likely to do so (- 12% "very likely" and 14% "quite likely"). The proportion of finalists who had already applied to do further postgraduate studies was even higher at Russell Group and other 'old' universities, but noticeably lower at 'new' universities.

Overall, however the 'net impact' of the recession in terms of influencing finalists to consider postgraduate study was still relatively low, at just 7%.

Looking at the career intentions of the 'class of 2009', around a third (34%) still plan to take a 'graduate job' after graduating while one in ten (10%) expects to take up a 'non-graduate-level full-time role.' 28% intend to do a postgraduate course, 11% to take a year out, 5% to take on part-time work and 3% to undertake some form of voluntary work.

But there are also notable differences in intention between the finalists at 'old' and 'new' universities. Just 25% of finalists at 'old' (including Russell Group) universities plan to take up a graduate-level job, compared to 42% at 'new' universities. But when it comes to further studies or taking a year out, the incidence of finalists from 'old' universities is significantly higher (36% against 21% and 16% against 6% respectively).

Research director Phil Crofts says "Our research shows that many final-year students are feeling pressured to go into postgraduate study, either by a perceived need to gain further qualifications to compete in the job market, or as a means of avoiding that competition. The danger is that, after spending time and money gaining a postgraduate degree, some students will find themselves overqualified. However, on the macro level, there could be a positive outcome with a better-educated workforce and a country more able to compete in the global knowledge economy."

Monday, 15 June 2009