

Why you shouldn't go to university

New



research suggests that half of full-time students set to graduate this summer are seriously considering postgrad options. This is especially popular with those at Russell Group or other older universities, where, according to [Opinionpanel Research](#), almost a third of final year students have applied for more study.

One major cause of this is the recession. And the reasons are not just the sheer lack of jobs for graduating students, but also because the students surveyed thought that the lack of sufficient graduate jobs meant there was more need to "stand out from the crowd." In fact, the research also suggests (as seen in other surveys elsewhere), that final year students are having a very hard time, and are seriously rethinking their plans. [Many say they would consider part-time or non-graduate-level roles.](#)

It's not a pretty picture for students, and Tom Mursell (whom you can see above) could be forgiven if he had a wry smile. The 19-year-old decided not to go to university, and has set up his own website, notgoingtouni.com, to encourage others to follow his path. Here he explains why.....

"Just over a year ago I remember visiting a careers adviser in my local careers centre and telling him I'd decided I didn't think uni was for me at this stage. However, I didn't know what my options were.

"Well what is it you see yourself doing in a few years time?" he asked. And, like a lot of young people I didn't have a clue. The only difference with me was that I had decided not to go to uni.

I finally told the adviser that I thought a managerial position would suit me (a family friend was doing a retail management course) and I was met with a patronising talk about how there are different types of managers. This was probably the most careers advice I got face-to-face during college or at least advice which didn't involve talking about University courses.

One evening I was looking for jobs online, still not knowing what I wanted to do, and stumbled across a trainee legal position. The prospect of earning whilst studying to become a solicitor excited me, not least because of my interest in Law. I then found similar training positions in different industries; companies offering a salary and the chance to gain a qualification at the same time. At some stage my inner-entrepreneur came into play after finding all these opportunities yet no single place to find them together.

I decided to set up notgoingtouni.co.uk, a website for school and college leavers which offered everything outside of University - "the advice and jobs you probably didn't know about!"

However, turning my back on University at age 18 has led me to some hurdles, but I'm sure I've made the right choice. I questioned what it actually meant to not go to university now, and from what I've seen the days where any university degree meant an automatic job, are long gone, especially in the current climate. Should success in life be measured on how far you get in full-time education? Personally I feel it shouldn't, and whilst I may be met with people saying that the average graduate will earn £100,000 more over their lifetime than non-graduates, I think success in life lies with happiness. Whilst it may be nice to earn such a large salary, not everyone aspires to be a brain surgeon.

When I first told my parents I wasn't going to university (at least in the short-term) they were a bit shocked as they felt it was always going to be the next step for me. I don't blame any parents for feeling anxious when their child declares this as they naturally want the best for them. I'm often asked by worried parents exactly what choices their son/daughter has and whether they're ruling out education altogether. My replies are always the same. University isn't just for 18 year olds, and at some stage in our working lives we may make a decision to go back to study, arguably when you're more motivated to do so. There also seems to be a stigma attached to people who don't go to university and a common misconception that your choices are either an apprenticeship at age 16 or university at 18. In reality there is a huge grey area, one which I want to educate others about.

There are apprenticeships and training schemes in all manner of areas, from accountancy to law, not necessarily the pre-conceived plumbing or bricklaying. There are also now so many alternative ways to study and notgoingtouni.co.uk works closely with the likes of The Open University where school leavers can study a degree for free if they earn under £16,000. There are also many employers who offer the opportunity to work whilst studying towards a foundation or honours degree.

Do I regret not going to uni? No, because I've discovered my true passion and picked up skills I may never have got at university. However, I also haven't ruled out education altogether."

What do you think? Should A level students reconsider university or is a degree more vital than ever?