

University of Bristol graduates among UK's most targeted by employers, study finds

Graduates from the University of Bristol are the third-most sought after by top employers, a study has found.

Research institute High Fliers surveyed 100 graduate employing organisations, including aerospace giant Airbus, broadcasters BBC and Channel 4 and GCHQ, for a report on the job market for those leaving higher education.

The study found that Bristol graduates were the third-most targeted – up from seventh last year and above those completing their studies at Oxford and Cambridge.

Final year students at the University of Manchester and University of Nottingham were found to be the most sought after by surveyed companies. Graduates from two other South West institutions, the University of Bath and the University of Exeter, also ranked in the top 20, in 11th and 14th place respectively.

Professor Tansy Jessop, pro-vice chancellor for education at the University of Bristol, where around 350 employers come to Bristol's campus each year to recruit students and share skills, said the findings were "hugely inspiring".

Professor Jessop said: "We are proud that our students leave us with the knowledge, skills and attitude they need to take on the world. We are also proud of the excellent teaching that builds this firm foundation, and our superb careers service which nurtures their talents."

Stuart Johnson, director of the university's careers service, added: "The team have done a superb job in supporting employer partnerships in the context of a very challenging couple of years, and it's great to see everyone's hard work and focus pay off."

The report also found that graduates from top universities could expect to earn a median starting salary of £32,000 – the first rise in that figure in eight years – and more than £50,000 from some top graduate employers.

The number of graduate vacancies currently available is now 11% higher than the pre-pandemic peak of 2019, while the number of graduate jobs on offer in 2022 is expected to increase by around 15% – the highest rise in more than 15 years.

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The top five academic institutions, including Bristol, were found to have attracted the most top graduate employers for virtual university careers fairs, university-specific employer presentations, careers service promotions and initiatives, and other locally run publicity during the 2021-2022 recruitment season

According to the report, a “significant minority” of the UK’s top graduate employers stopped targeting specific universities during the Covid-19 pandemic, with one in six recruiters taking a national or sector-led approach to their graduate recruitment.

Employers targeting specific universities increased the number of institutions they were looking at from an average of 21 universities in 2020-2021 to 26 in 2021-2022.

Accounting and professional services firms, public sector employers, retailers, investment banks and law firms were found to have actively publicised their graduate vacancies at the largest number of local universities.

Top 10 universities targeted by graduate employers 2021/2022 – according to High Fliers’ Graduate Market report

1. University of Manchester
2. University of Nottingham
3. University of Bristol
4. University of Birmingham
5. University of Leeds
6. University of Warwick
7. University of Cambridge
8. University of Sheffield
9. University of Edinburgh
10. University of Oxford

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