

Employers: University graduates not prepared to enter the workforce, a CareerBuilder.co.uk survey reveals

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LONDON, April 30, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Despite the fact that 95 per cent of UK companies plan to hire recent university graduates this year, only 1 in 3 employers (23 per cent) believe that academic institutions are adequately preparing students for vacant roles in their organisations. More than half (54 per cent) say universities are preparing students for "some roles, but not all," and 19 per cent do not believe they are preparing them adequately at all.

The national survey was conducted online on behalf of CareerBuilder.co.uk of more than 400 employers.

When asked to name which workplace skills they think recent graduates' lack, almost half of employers cited interpersonal or people skills (49 per cent). Other skills lacking in new graduates, included:

- Problem-solving skills: 40 per cent
- Creative thinking: 39 per cent
- Oral communication: 37 per cent
- Teamwork: 34 per cent
- Written communication: 33 per cent
- Leadership: 32 per cent
- Project management: 24 per cent
- Research and analysis: 19 per cent
- Maths: 17 per cent
- Computer and Technical: 17 per cent

"Though nearly all UK companies plan to hire recent graduates, the vast majority of these do not feel students are adequately prepared for the workforce," says Scott Helmes, Managing Director of CareerBuilder UK. "This finding underscores the need for companies to work more closely with educational institutes to ensure graduates are developing the skills that growing businesses need."

Are new graduates ready?

When asked where specifically educational institutes are letting their students down in preparing for the workforce, employers cited the following concerns:

- Too much emphasis on book learning instead of real world learning - 53 per cent
- I need workers with a blend of technical skills and soft skills - 42 per cent
- Not enough emphasis on internships, work experience and apprenticeships - 13 per cent
- Entry-level roles within my organisation are more complex today - 17 per cent
- Technology is changing too quickly for academics to keep up - 12 per cent
- Not enough students are graduating with the degrees my company needs - 12 per cent

Which degrees have the best job prospects?

Employers in the UK feel that the most desirable qualification for graduates to hold is a business degree, with 35 per cent of employers naming it the most in-demand degree at their firms, followed closely by computer and information sciences (20 per cent). Engineering degrees are also in high demand (16 per cent), with maths and statistics (15 per cent) and law and legal degrees (14 per cent) rounding out the list.

Where are the opportunities?

Employers are primarily looking towards new graduates to fill roles in information technology (39 per cent) and business development (36 per cent). Opportunities also abound in customer service (32 per cent) and finance and accounting (29 per cent). Health (23 per cent) rounds out the top five job types.

What will these jobs pay?

More than one third of employers (42 per cent) who plan to hire recent college graduates will offer higher starting salaries than they did last year. The majority of employers (47 per cent) expect salaries to stay the same, and 11 per cent expect to offer lower starting salaries.

However, salaries are not set in stone: The majority of employers (71 per cent) say they are willing to negotiate salary when extending job offers to recent graduates.

The majority of employers (83 per cent) who plan to hire new college graduates are willing to negotiate or provide new graduates with a variety of perks. After salary, the most popular benefits employers say they will negotiate are the following:

- Flexible hours: 41 per cent
- Bonuses: 26 per cent
- Reimbursement for additional training: 26 per cent
- Paying for mobile phone: 23 per cent
- Relocation expenses: 21 per cent
- Reimbursement for commuting expenses: 19 per cent
- More holiday days: 22 per cent
- Remote working options: 17 per cent

**Percentages may add up to more than 100 due to rounding.*

Methodology

The survey was conducted among 404 adults with decision making influence for hiring staff in the UK. The interviews were conducted online by Redshift Research in March & April 2015 using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4.9 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Sample was selected from the Crowdology & Crowdology partner panels. Crowdology™ is an online panel owned and operated by Redshift Research. The Crowdology™ panel is balanced across regional, age and gender demographic factors, and is nationally representative of the UK population. Each respondent completes 120 profiling questions before being accepted to join our panel. Panel Quality Management is carried out frequently to ensure reliable surveys.

Although Redshift specializes in providing services to Marketing Communications companies (the Crowdology polling panel, for example) it has a long pedigree of full service research project execution across industry sectors. Redshift Research is adept at executing focus groups, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, online research, desk research and statistical modelling, to mention just a few techniques.

About CareerBuilder®

CareerBuilder is the global leader in human capital solutions, helping companies target and attract great talent. Its online career site, CareerBuilder.com®, is the largest in the United States with more than 24 million unique visitors and 1 million jobs. CareerBuilder works with the world's top employers, providing everything from labor market intelligence to talent management software and other recruitment solutions. Owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE:GCI), Tribune Company and The McClatchy Company (NYSE:MNI), CareerBuilder and its subsidiaries operate in the United States, Europe, South America, Canada and Asia. For more information, visit www.careerbuilder.com.

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