Department for Education

Planning for success: Graduates' career planning and its effect on graduate outcomes

Research report

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Contents

List of Figures and Tables

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Abbreviations and glossary of terms

Careers fair. An event which provides students with an opportunity to meet employers face-to-face and learn about current and upcoming vacancies.

Careers service. A service provided by universities to their students which offers them advice, guidance and information to assist them in obtaining employment and plan for a career.

DLHE. The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) is a survey series conducted on an annual basis to determine what leavers from higher education are doing in terms of their main activity (i.e. employment, further study or unemployed) and the details of this main activity (i.e. location, occupation, industry and salary). The survey is conducted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in collaboration with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland. The DLHE survey series is comprised of two stages the DLHE and the Longitudinal DLHE.

- **DLHE** The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey is conducted six months after leavers from higher education have graduated.

- **Longitudinal DLHE** The Longitudinal Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (LDLHE) survey is conducted every two years. A sample of leavers who graduated three and a half years ago and took part in the DLHE survey are re-contacted to take part in this survey.

Degree classification. The level of qualification achieved upon the completion of a higher education course.

Graduate level job. Survey respondents were asked about the level of jobs they had applied for and assessed at an individual level whether they would categorise the roles as at a *graduate level*. A distinction is made in the report between *graduate level jobs*; where respondents assessed themselves the level of the jobs they applied for; and 'professional or managerial' roles which have been classified (by IFF) by identifying job title and job duties and then coded using SOC (see below) and is used to measure graduate outcomes 2.5 years after graduation.

Professional or managerial employment. For the purposes of this report a professional or managerial occupation is defined as any role falling into to the top three 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes (Managers, directors and senior officials; Professional occupations; and Associate professional and technical occupations).

Higher Education. Higher education courses are programmes leading to qualifications which are above the standard of GCE, A-levels or other Level 3 qualifications (in this study the focus is on undergraduate degrees which are level 6 qualifications).

Higher Education Providers (HEP) deliver higher education courses and award higher education qualifications. Higher education institutions can include UK universities, Further Education Colleges, higher education corporations and designated institutions.

Non-professional employment. For the purposes of this report a non-professional occupation is defined as any role that does not fall into to the top three 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes (Administrative and secretarial occupations and lower).

Part-time professional or managerial employment. For the purposes of this report a part-time professional or managerial occupation is defined as any role in the top three 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes where the job holder was working fewer than 35 hours a week.

TRAC Group. TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) was developed under the Transparency Review of Higher Education funding of 1998-99 as a standard methodology for UK higher education institutes to disclose their expenditure across four main activities; Teaching, Research, Support activities (i.e. proposal writing and administration) and Other (i.e. commercial activities and residences). TRAC Groups categorise HEIs into seven groupings depending on the percentage of their total income derived from Research. For the purposes of this research an updated version of the 2012-13 TRAC definitions were used which are listed in the annex (Table A).

- **TRAC Group A:** Most Russell Group universities (all have medical schools) excluding LSE plus specialist medical schools;
- **TRAC Group B:** All other institutions with Research income of 22 per cent or more of total income;
- **TRAC Group C:** Institutions with a Research income of 8-21 per cent of total income;
- **TRAC Group D:** Institutions with a Research income of between 5 per cent and 8 per cent of total income and those with a total income > £120m;
- **TRAC Group E:** Teaching institutions with a turnover of between £40m and £119m;
- **TRAC Group F:** Smaller teaching institutions;
- **TRAC Group G:** Specialist music/art colleges;

Unemployment. Unemployed and looking for work

Work experience. A short term placement that provides individuals with experience of an occupation, industry and working environment. Work experience placements come in various forms:

- **Graduate internship:** A fixed and limited period of time spent working within an organisation as part of a structured programme;

- **Non-compulsory work experience:** Work experience placements which are not a requirement of a higher education course. These may or may not have been arranged with help from the university;

- **Sandwich year/industrial placement:** A period of time, typically a year, which is spent working in an organisation or industry in general. This is a compulsory element of some higher education courses;

- **Short structured placements:** Work experience placements which are shorter than an industrial placement or internship. These can be either optional or a compulsory aspect of a course;

- **Vacation internship:** A fixed and limited period of time spent working within an organisation as part of a structured programme which takes place during university holidays, typically over the summer.

Abbreviations:

BIS – Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

CCR – Correlated Components Regression

DLHE – Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education

HE – Higher Education

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HEP – Higher Education Provider

IAG - Information, Advice and Guidance

JACS – Joint Academic Coding System

SOC – Standard Occupational Classification

Executive Summary

What behaviours, factors and characteristics determine graduate outcomes?

The study examined a cohort of UK domiciled students who completed their full-time undergraduate study in 2011/12 and were aged 18-21 at the outset of their study. The cohort consisted of 7,500 students drawn from 27 institutions. This study combined data from the 6 month Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey with data from a follow up survey conducted two years later. It employed multivariate analysis techniques to understand the relative importance of different behaviours, characteristics and factors in determining graduate outcomes. We considered in turn:

a.) What led graduates to a positive outcome; that is employment or further study rather than unemployment;

b.) What led graduates with a positive outcome to employment, and what to further study;

c.) What led the employed to professional or managerial employment as opposed to non-professional employment;

d.) What led those in professional or managerial employment to full-time as opposed to part-time roles.

The three factors which were most important in guiding graduates to a **positive outcome**, that is employment or further study rather than unemployment, were:

1.) **Undertaking paid work** while at university or in the six months immediately after;

2.) **Focusing job searches** exclusively on graduate level jobs[1] and making most applications while still studying;

3.) **Having a career plan** upon leaving university.

The **type of the institution that they attended**[2] was the most influential factor on whether students with a positive outcome ended up in **employment as opposed to further study**

[1] Graduates were asked about the level of jobs they had applied for and assessed at an individual level whether they would categorise the roles as at a *graduate level*. A distinction is made in the report between *graduate level jobs*; where graduates assessed themselves the level of the jobs they applied for; and 'professional or managerial' roles which have been classified (by IFF) using graduates' job title and job duties and coding against the SOC classification. All roles falling into the top 3 SOC codes are defined as professional or managerial'.

[2] This is not necessarily a causative factor in itself, as the type of institution attended will likely be influenced by other factors such as prior attainment and socio-economic status

at the two and a half year stage. Graduates who attended TRAC Group C-F institutions (with lower research incomes or teaching institutions) were more likely to have entered into employment whereas those who attended TRAC Group A-B universities with a greater research focus were more likely to be in further study.

Among graduates who were in employment, **knowing exactly what they wanted to do** or having a good idea about types of jobs and careers upon completing university was the most important factor or behaviour in determining whether that employment was in **professional or managerial roles or in non-professional roles.**

Having a very targeted approach to job applications was most important in influencing whether an individual entered into **full-time professional or managerial employment as opposed to the same level of employment on a part-time basis**. Those who reported they had applied only to *graduate level jobs* (with most applications made while at university) more often ended up in full-time professional or managerial employment rather than part-time employment at this level. After this, graduates who had **undertaken unpaid work experience** as part of their focused approach were more likely to find full-time professional or managerial employment as opposed to part-time employment at the same level.

Graduate outcomes two and a half years after graduating

Two and a half years after graduating, an overwhelming majority of graduates in our survey were in employment: 84 per cent reported employment as their main activity. This represented an increase of 14 percentage points since the initial DLHE, six months after the students graduated.

The increase was driven by students who had previously been in further study joining the labour market; 70 per cent of those who were in further study at DLHE (6 months after graduating) were employed two years later. This was further complemented by graduates who had initially failed to find employment. 6 per cent of the Planning for Success cohort had been unemployed six months after graduation, and 82 per cent of these were employed by the time of this survey, two years later.

Employment was not the only positive outcome identified by the survey:

- Six per cent of the Planning for Success graduates who had been in employment after six months had returned to study two years later;

- Five per cent of those who had been unemployed six months after graduation found themselves in education two years later;

- These students joined the five per cent of the cohort who had remained in study since their graduation from their initial degree course.

There was a small degree of movement “against the current”: two per cent of those who had been in employment had become unemployed, as had three per cent of those who had been in further study.

Student destinations surveys among leavers from Higher Education traditionally focus on the separation between professional or managerial employment and non-professional employment, with the former an indicator of the return on investment of learning.

- Almost two-thirds of the Planning for Success Survey cohort (64 per cent) were working in a professional or managerial occupation two and a half years after graduation. This equates to 76 per cent of all graduates whose main activity was employment in the survey working in a professional or managerial role;

- Graduates working in professional or managerial occupation earned in excess of a 35 per cent salary premium in full-time positions than their counterparts in non-professional positions and a 25 per cent premium compared to part-time professional or managerial roles.

Male graduates, who lagged behind female graduates at the six month survey stage, generally experienced more positive outcomes than their female counterparts; they were more likely to report working in a professional or managerial role, full-time professional or managerial employment specifically or further study as their main activity and, of those in employment, were also more likely to report progression in the workplace. In the context of employment, these differences by gender permeated all aspects including salary and sectors worked in.

Graduates who attended more research-focused (e.g. TRAC Group A) universities and those from households belonging to higher managerial and professional occupations were also more likely to experience the most positive outcomes in the Planning for Success Survey, specifically full-time professional or managerial employment and further study.

Career plans on starting university

Most of the graduates in the Planning for Success cohort chose to study at university either in order to improve their employability or in order to pursue a specific career. Fewer were inspired by academic interest. However, when choosing a specific subject it was personal interest which was most likely to be the deciding factor.

At the point of applying to university graduates were evenly split between those with a career plan and those without, although almost one in five (18 per cent) knew exactly which job or career they wanted to pursue.

Those who had clearer plans were more likely to have reported positive outcomes two and a half years after graduation, with those whose main activity was working in a professional or managerial role or further study more likely to have had clearer career plans at an early stage than those who were in non-professional employment or were unemployed.

Graduates who attended institutions with a lower research focus (TRAC Group C, D, E or F) were more likely than those who studied at more research-focused (e.g. TRAC Group A) universities to have chosen a course and place of study based on a set of pre-identified core career requirements, and more generally to have had clearer career plans at the point they applied for university.

Sources of careers advice

Graduates were most likely to make use of their own networks for careers advice (84 per cent had spoken to their family and friends).

A large majority of graduates (70 per cent) made use of universities' careers Information and Guidance (IAG) structures, either whilst studying or directly after graduation. Around half of all graduates had used their careers service specifically and a comparable proportion had sought advice from the academic staff at their institution. In the qualitative interviews, graduates tended to identify academic staff as having the greatest impact on their career planning, largely due to their specialist expertise and experience in the field of interest.

No differences were seen in terms of the proportions of those in different types of employment making use of the university careers service. However, graduates who had experienced unemployment were more likely to have utilised the service than those in employment and to have done so after graduation.

Most commonly, graduates accessed their university career service website or communications to seek out careers and job opportunities (36 per cent of graduates did this); slightly fewer graduates attended careers fairs (32 per cent).

Those graduates who did not use careers services (three in ten of all graduates) cited a lack of awareness of what was available, and the belief that there was no need as they knew exactly what they wanted to do at this time, both cited by around two in five graduates who did not use the careers service. Qualitative interviews indicated that in cases of the latter, there was a tendency for graduates to feel that their chosen path was too niche for the careers service to add novel insight and guidance. In line with this, a minority of graduates who used the careers service said that the advice received was too generic to warrant a strong positive impact on career planning.

Work experience

Work experience is a common feature of university life with almost three quarters of graduates undertaking it in some form whilst at university or in the six months after graduation. For three in ten this included a mandatory work placement as part of their degree, with just over half organising paid and / or unpaid work to gain career experience, around a quarter undertaking an internship and a similar proportion participating in non-compulsory placements as part of their course.

All forms of work experience appear to be beneficial, with those who had participated in work experience more likely to be working in a professional or managerial occupation two and a half years after graduation and less likely to be in non-professional employment or unemployed than those who did not do work experience. Work experience was important in securing employment for over half and indeed directly led to job offers for over a quarter.

Graduates who had undertaken non-compulsory work experience tended to be those who had been proactive about career development in other ways too, with work experience one part of a package.

Graduate internships were relatively rare and appear to have been taken up by a limited group but were the most successful in terms of leading to an offer of employment in the role they wanted to work at the end of the experience and were especially likely to lead to professional or managerial roles.

Unpaid work experience, whilst widely undertaken, was the least useful in terms of direct offers of employment and was no more likely to lead to a full-time professional or managerial role than to unemployment or a non-professional role.

Almost three quarters of graduates had engaged in paid work unrelated to their career aspirations whilst at university, or in the six months afterwards. Whilst this appears to help in gaining employment in the longer term it does not necessarily help in gaining professional or managerial level employment.

Other CV building activities

Overall 70 per cent of graduates had participated in at least one CV building activity, other than work experience. The most common activity was volunteering work, but relatively high numbers were active in non-academic university life, such as participation in societies and sporting activities and/or took on additional courses to build specific skills.

Those that attended TRAC Group A or B universities, achieved higher class degrees or had done work experience were more likely to have engaged in CV building activities, perhaps indicating a need to distinguish themselves from their peers in competitive sectors or motivation to follow a particular career path.

Female graduates and those whose main activity was part-time professional or managerial employment were more likely to have completed volunteering work whilst male graduates were more likely to have taken up the structured opportunities to demonstrate leadership or team work provided by university life. A third (33%) of males had been society committee members, 29% represented their university in a competitive capacity and 14% received an award for extracurricular activities compared to 28%, 18% and 11% of female graduates respectively.

Those whose main activity was further study or full-time professional or managerial employment were more likely to have engaged in most of the listed activities but especially to have been society committee members, or represented their university in a competitive capacity.

Those whose main activity was non-professional employment or unemployment at the Planning for Success Survey stage were least likely to have engaged in nearly all CV building activities.

Approach to applications

The majority of graduates (62 per cent) had *at least* a good idea about the types of job or career they wanted to pursue at the point of leaving university, significantly greater than the proportion stating this at the point of entering university (50 per cent). A third of graduates reported greater clarity with regard to their career plan compared to when they

entered university. Those with the clearest career plans upon leaving university were more likely to report a positive outcome of professional or managerial employment or further study by the Planning for Success Survey stage.

Over half (57 per cent) of graduates **started** making job applications while still at university, but more than half (52 per cent) also **made the majority** of applications in the six months following graduation. Only 14 per cent of graduates had not made any job applications within six months of leaving university, with these graduates commonly citing a desire to pursue further study as their reason for not doing so.

There was some evidence of a targeted approach to making job applications; the modal number of job applications made was between one and five and almost two-thirds of graduates (64 per cent) applied exclusively or mainly to *graduate level* positions. Those in full-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey point were seen to be more focused and streamlined in their approach to job applications. They were more likely than others to have *started* applications prior to their final year, to have done *most* of their applications while still at university, and to have mainly focused their job searches on *graduate level* roles.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Background

Higher Education has a significant role to play within the UK's modern, post-industrial economy, as a source of innovation and creativity that can drive business growth and as a source of the skilled labour that will be required to guarantee future prosperity. It also sits at the centre of the agenda to encourage and facilitate social mobility.

The opportunity to improve their employment prospects and realise their career ambitions is for many students a key reason to go on to higher education. However, while on average graduates experience good outcomes and a strong return on their investment[3], there can be significant variation. Both policy makers and students will be keen to understand how students' own attitudes and career planning can influence these returns and how they can be maximised.

The Destinations of Leavers' from Higher Education survey series

Currently the most comprehensive survey data available about early graduate careers comes from HESA's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. This is a two stage survey, with an annual census of graduates taken approximately six-months after completion and a biennial sample follow-up survey after a further three years (DLHE Longitudinal survey). The six-month survey achieves very high response rates; the latest published statistics from the survey detail the destinations of some 440,000 students that graduated in 2013/14, enabling analysis of outcomes at a highly detailed level[4]. While smaller in scale, the longitudinal survey still delivered a total sample of over 81,000 interviews in its last edition[5], making it a significant and robust source of information about graduate destinations three and a half years after graduation.

Both stages of the DLHE survey provide a snapshot of graduate outcomes, focusing predominately on capturing factual data about the graduates' circumstances on a given census date. Results are used to supply data for the Key Information Set which can help prospective students in choosing what and where to study at HE level.

They also provide ***some*** qualitative data about how jobs were found, career satisfaction, the contribution that university education in general makes to employability and the specific importance of a graduate's qualification in securing employment. However, the focus of the DLHEs is very much more on measurement than on qualitatively explaining how different graduates reach different outcomes.

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[3] Walker and Zhu (2013) 'The impact of University degrees on the lifecyle of earnings: Some further analysis'.

[4] Destinations of leavers from Higher Education in the UK for academic year 2013/14

[5] Destinations of leavers from Higher Education longitudinal 2010/11

Early iterations of the DLHE longitudinal survey attempted to capture graduates' full career history up to that point, tracking all the activities that each graduate engaged in in the first three and a half years of their life post-graduation. This information proved expensive to collect however, so the set of questions was discontinued.

This Planning for Success Survey therefore aims to gather further evidence on the career strategies and work experience of graduates, with a particular focus on the impact that these strategies and this experience has on their early career outcomes.

Research objectives

IFF Research was commissioned by BIS to survey the 2011-12 Higher Education graduate cohort and to revisit their responses to the six month survey two years later. Specifically the Planning for Success Survey sought to provide further insight into student outcomes, expanding BIS' knowledge and evidence base on higher education. The Planning for Success Survey has not been designed to be a replacement for the Longitudinal DLHE; rather it was aimed to supplement existing data on graduate outcomes.

The overall aims of the project were to:

- Provide a better understanding of the results presented in the annual Destination of Leavers' from Higher Education (DLHE) survey and the extent to which they provide a robust picture for comparing outcomes for different types of student;

- Understand the expectations, ambitions and job search strategies of different types of student.

The research specifically aimed to further the evidence base in the following areas:

- Graduates' career planning strategies – when they started planning their career, what job search strategies were used and what factors influenced these strategies;

- Detail on applications to work and / or further study – number of applications submitted, evidence of targeting applications in terms of *graduate level* jobs, sector or employer type (and subject in the case of applications made to further study);

- Application outcomes – number of interviews and job / further study offers (along with when this role was secure e.g. before leaving university);

- Expectations of the job market and whether these changed with time;

- Changes in graduates' employment / study status since DLHE and future career plans;

- Satisfaction with progress to date.

Survey methodology

The research comprised two elements, an initial quantitative survey of graduates and a small-scale, in-depth qualitative follow-up of a sub-set of those who completed the quantitative survey. The following section summarises the methodological approach taken.

Defining the survey population

The study was focussed on understanding more about what informs and influences graduates' careers choices and pathways.

It is well known that graduates are a diverse and heterogeneous population, and studies of graduate populations – such as the DLHE surveys cited above - are typically very large studies which attempt to understand their population in its full diversity. This level of resource was not available to the Planning for Success Survey, and it was therefore agreed at an early stage that the focus here should be on a specific sub-section of the graduate population, namely those who:

- completed an undergraduate degree in the 2011/12 academic year;
- studied a full-time or sandwich course;
- were aged 21 or under when starting their course;
- were UK domiciled immediately prior to commencing their course.

The survey sought to reach its population of interest by collating contact details from the HEPs that they attended: this is the method most likely to yield accurate contact information for graduates and provides a representative population to sample from.

Here again we looked to restrict the scope of the survey by focusing only on publicly-funded, English HEPs which provided a 'generalist' offering. This meant that specialist providers including conservatoires or performing arts institutions, creative arts and other specialist institutions which focussed on very narrow student populations were out of scope of the study. A small number of additional HEPs were also excluded on the basis that their student cohort was less typical even though there were not considered specialist providers in the strictest of senses.[6]

Sampling the survey population

One of the starting hypotheses for the study was that the institution that graduates attend is likely to have some degree of influence on the outcomes that graduates achieve. We therefore sought to control as far as possible the profile of participating HEPs. We did this

[6] These additional HEPs included those that only offered provision at a certain level or whose student population was demographically different.

by first classifying all in-scope HEPs against a two dimensional grid – TRAC grouping[7] crossed by a 'preparedness for employment' classification[8]. We then invited HEPs to participate in the survey in line with their representation across this grid. In total, 68 HEPs were invited to participate in the study, and a total of 27 agreed to do so.

Table 1.1: Profile of participating HEPs

Defining the population of interest and the survey population						
		Preparedness for employment quintile				
University TRAC Group		1	2	3	4	5
A Russell group and medical schools	No. of HEPs	5	6	3	5	0
	Participating HEPs	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**0**
B Other institutions with high research incomes	No. of HEPs	3	2	2	3	6
	Participating HEPs	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**2**
C Institutions with medium research incomes	No. of HEPs	3	1	2	3	4
	Participating HEPs	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**
D Institutions with low research incomes	No. of HEPs	2	2	4	3	7
	Participating HEPs	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**

[7] HEPs are classified into one of seven TRAC groupings which are differentiated according to the percentage of the total income derived from research income. The groupings range from A to G with TRAC A comprising of Russell Group universities (excluding LSE and specialist medical schools) and TRAC G of Specialist music/arts teaching institutions which were excluded from this particular research study. More information on TRAC groupings can be found in the Technical Annex (Table A).

[8] 'Preparedness for employment' quintiles were derived by ranking providers in descending order of a mean score of their graduates' perception of how well their higher education experience prepared them for employment (taken from 11/12 DLHE data – Q29).

E Large teaching institutions	No. of HEPs	3	5	6	4	5
	Participating HEPs	**0**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**1**
F Small teaching institutions	No. of HEPs	4	3	2	2	0
	Participating HEPs	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0**

Participating HEPs were asked to supply contact information for those graduates who had not opted out of being re-contacted about a follow-up survey.

Fieldwork and sample outcomes

Following a pilot exercise involving 47 pilot interviews (31 online and 16 on the telephone) and a further nine cognitive interviews, the main survey was conducted in two sequential phases; an initial online phase followed by a telephone survey.

All graduates for whom an email address was held were sent an email invitation to the online survey. Altogether, 33,716 graduates were emailed and a total of 5,499 responded, representing an online response rate of 17 per cent.

Graduates for whom we held a telephone number but had not completed the online survey (nor indicated that they did not want to participate in the study) were then called and asked to complete the survey over the phone. A random stratified approach was taken to the telephone survey to ensure that the response rate achieved in each cell of the sampling matrix outlined above was consistent but also that around 200 telephone interviews were achieved in each of these cells.

A total of 2,000 graduates completed the questionnaire over the telephone, with an achieved response rate of 78 per cent[9]. A more detailed breakdown of response rate is included in the Technical Annex (Table C).

A total of 7,499 responses to the study were achieved representing a response rate 22 per cent (calculated as the number of completed interviews as a proportion of all graduates for whom either an email address or telephone number was supplied).

[9] Response is calculated as the number of completed interviews as a proportion of all calls made and a definite outcome achieved.

All interviews were conducted at IFF central London offices. On average the telephone interview lasted for 22 minutes. The fieldwork period ran from October through to November 2014.

Qualitative follow-up

In addition to the main survey, a total of 30 in depth qualitative interviews were conducted over the phone, the purpose of which was to explore in greater detail graduates' survey responses.

Graduates were sampled for the qualitative in-depth interviews based on the answers given in the main survey and their relative exposure to the key topics of interest. A good spread was also achieved by subject studied, type of university attended and gender (see Table D in the Technical Annex). Interviews lasted around 45 minutes and fieldwork overlapped with the main survey, starting in November and finishing in December 2014.

Understanding the survey population

It should be clear from the description of the survey methodology that – unlike the DLHE series, which starts with a census survey and then proceeds, at the longitudinal stage, to a sampled survey of the entire population - the survey population for the Planning for Success Survey represented a sub-section of the population of interest (based on the criteria listed on page 22), as summarised in the table below.

Table 1.2: Understanding the Planning for Success Study population

Defining the population of interest and the survey population			
	Total population (all 2011-12 HE leavers)	Population of interest (in-scope 2011-12 leavers at in-scope HEPs)	Survey population (in scope 2011-12 leavers at in-scope HEPs who agreed to participate)
No. of HEPs	**165**	**100**	**27**
No. of Students	477,424	152,675	7,499

This resulted in a population which had a higher proportion of females, were more likely to have achieved a higher class of degree and more drawn from families from the higher Socio-Economic Classifications compared to the total 2011-12 HEP leaver population, as shown in table 1.3.

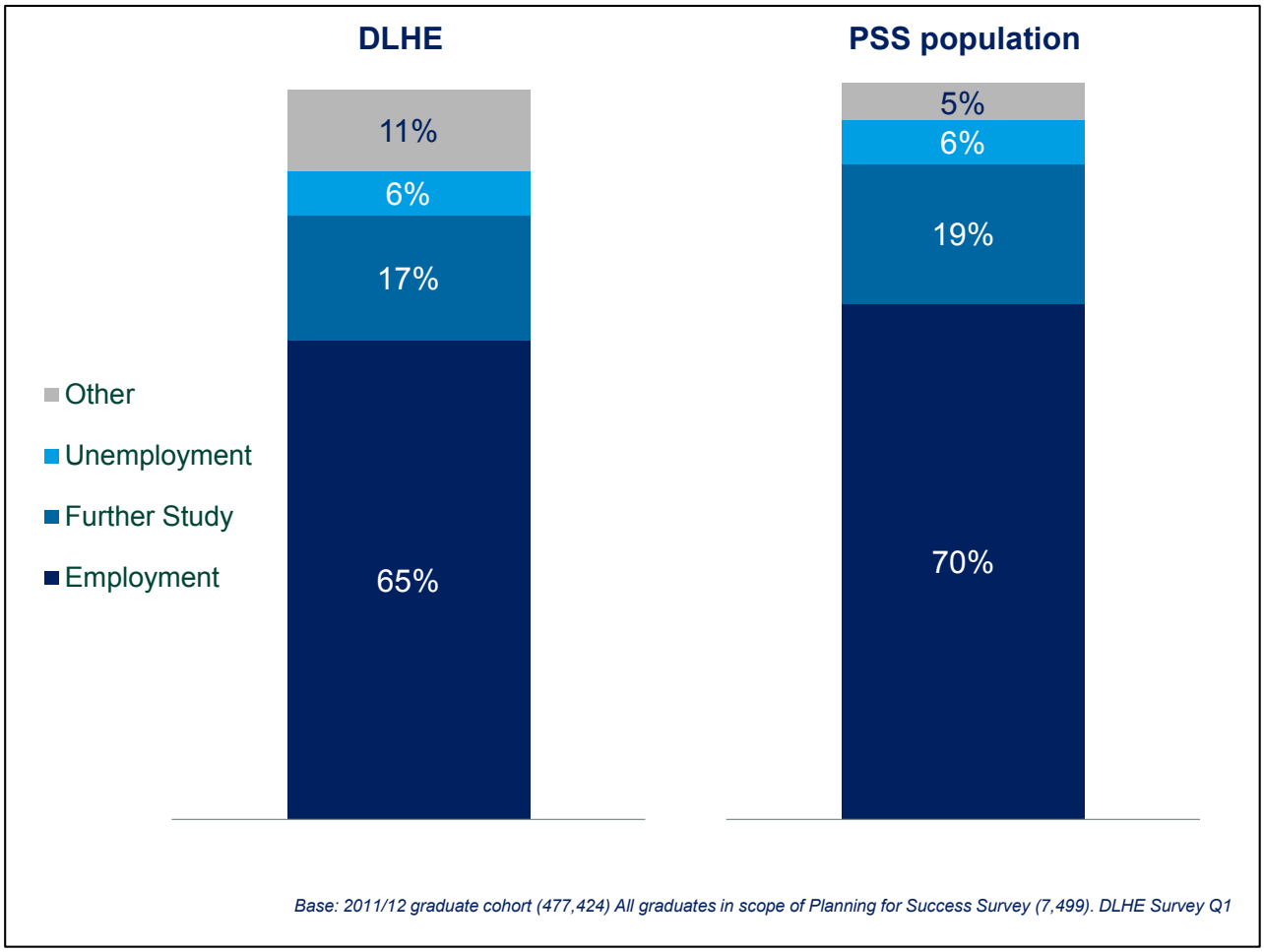
Table 1.3: Profiling the Planning for Success Survey population

Comparisons between total population and the survey population			
Profile		Total population (%)	Survey population (%)
Gender	*Base: All*	*(477,424)*	*(7,499)*
Female		42	60
Male		58	40
Degree class	*Base: All where classification applicable*	*(281,087)*	*(7,499)*
First		18	22
2:1		49	56
2:2		24	18
Third		4	2
Other		7	3
SEC	*Base: All with SEC classification*	*(244,659)*	*(6,287)*
Higher managerial & professional occupations		23	30
Lower managerial & professional occupations		30	31
Intermediate occupations		15	14
Small employers & own account workers		8	7
Lower supervisory & technical occupations		5	5
Semi-routine occupations		14	10
Routine occupations		6	5
Never worked & long-term unemployed		<1	0
Subject	*Base: All*	*(477,424)*	*(7,499)*
Medicine & dentistry		3	1
Subjects allied to medicine		10	6
Biological sciences		9	14
Veterinary science		<1	<1
Agriculture & related subjects		1	1
Physical sciences		4	5
Mathematical sciences		2	4
Computer science		4	4
Engineering & technology		6	6
Architecture, building & planning		3	2
Social studies		10	11

Comparisons between total population and the survey population		
Profile	Total population (%)	Survey population (%)
Law	4	4
Business & administrative studies	13	11
Mass communications and documentation	3	4
Languages	5	9
Historical and philosophical studies	4	5
Creative arts & design	8	9
Education	11	4
Combined	1	1

It is also worth noting that ***compared to the total cohort of 2011-12 graduates***, the Planning for Success Survey population were more likely to be in employment or in study at the six month stage, that they were equally likely to be unemployed and that they were less likely to be engaged in "other activities" (which included starting a job within the next month, travelling, retired, looking after the home or family etc.).

Figure 1.1 Comparing main outcomes between the total 2011-12 cohort of graduates and the Planning for Success Survey population 6 months after graduation



Weighting strategy

Survey data were weighted to correct for variation in levels of non-response by sub-groups. The profile of the 7,499 achieved interviews was compared to the profile of all 2011/12 graduates who would have been eligible for the study by key demographics. More information about the weighting strategy as well as the (un)weighted survey profiles are included in the Technical Annex (Table B, E and H).

Presentation of data

All survey data in this report are presented on a weighted basis, and are fully representative of the population of in-scope graduates. All bases presented are unweighted.

Unless otherwise stated, all differences commented on in this report are significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.

About this report

The findings in this report have been structured into seven separate chapters:

- **Chapter 2** explores the main graduate outcomes at the Planning for Success Survey stage two years on from DLHE, how closely these outcomes fitted into graduates' overall career plan and overall satisfaction with career to date.

- **Chapter 3** describes graduates' reasons and motivations for going to university and the extent to which they had a career plan when applying to university.

- **Chapter 4** focuses on the different sources of careers advice sought and used by graduates, including services provided specifically by their university, when services were accessed and reasons for not accessing specific careers support.

- **Chapter 5** concentrates on which graduates participated in different forms of work experience and the relative importance of different types of placements in terms of graduate outcomes.

- **Chapter 6** discusses other activities graduates participated in to enhance their CV and the extent to which involvement in these activities led to specific graduate outcomes.

- **Chapter 7** explores the extent to which graduates had a career plan upon leaving university and their varying approaches to applying for jobs and opportunities for further study.

- **Chapter 8** draws together the key findings from the report and incorporates multivariate analysis to help better understand the relative importance of different behaviours, characteristics and factors determining specific graduate outcomes.

Chapter 2 Graduate outcomes two and a half years after graduation

Chapter Summary

Outcomes for the cohort of graduates who formed the population of the Planning for Success Survey had changed significantly since DLHE. The proportion of graduates who considered employment their main outcome had increased by 14 percentage points and this was accompanied by a drop in the proportion in further study and unemployment.

Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) were working in a graduate occupation, equating to 76 per cent of all graduates whose main activity was employment. Those working in graduate level occupations earned in excess of a 35 per cent salary premium in full-time positions than their counterparts in non-graduate positions and 25 per cent in part-time roles.

Two and a half years after graduation, male graduates generally experienced more positive outcomes than their female counterparts; they were more likely to report (full-time) graduate employment or further study as their main activity. Of those in employment, male graduates were also more likely to report progression in the workplace. In the context of employment, these differences by gender permeated across all aspects, including salary and sectors worked in.

There was some indication that certain groups had returned to further study by the Planning for Success Survey point to improve their career prospects; namely those who achieved a 2:2 at undergraduate level and those whose main activity was unemployment at DLHE.

Two years on from DLHE, graduates were more likely to report having reached their career goals, and while the proportion working in a job they intended to be doing long-term had almost doubled since DLHE, this still represented a sizeable minority (36 per cent) of those in work.

Career satisfaction was strongly correlated with full-time professional or managerial employment and further study, however male graduates (who were more likely to report these as a main outcome by the Planning for Success survey) were no more likely to be satisfied with their career than women.

The Planning for Success Survey seeks to shed more light on the strategies and planning that impact on graduates' careers and job outcomes. In this first chapter of survey findings, we reveal in detail what these job outcomes were for our cohort of 2011-12 graduates, two and a half years after their graduation. The "outcome groups" that the chapter creates will then be used as a basis for analysis through the remainder of the report as we trace back the graduates' journey through their university life.

Graduates' main outcomes two and a half years after graduation

Successive DLHE surveys have shown that the vast majority of graduates are in employment as early as six months after graduation, and that the majority of those who are not in employment are undertaking further study. In the first chapter, we outlined that this was even more likely for the cohort of graduates who were in scope for this study.

Figure 2.1 Graduate (main) outcomes at the Planning for Success Survey stage

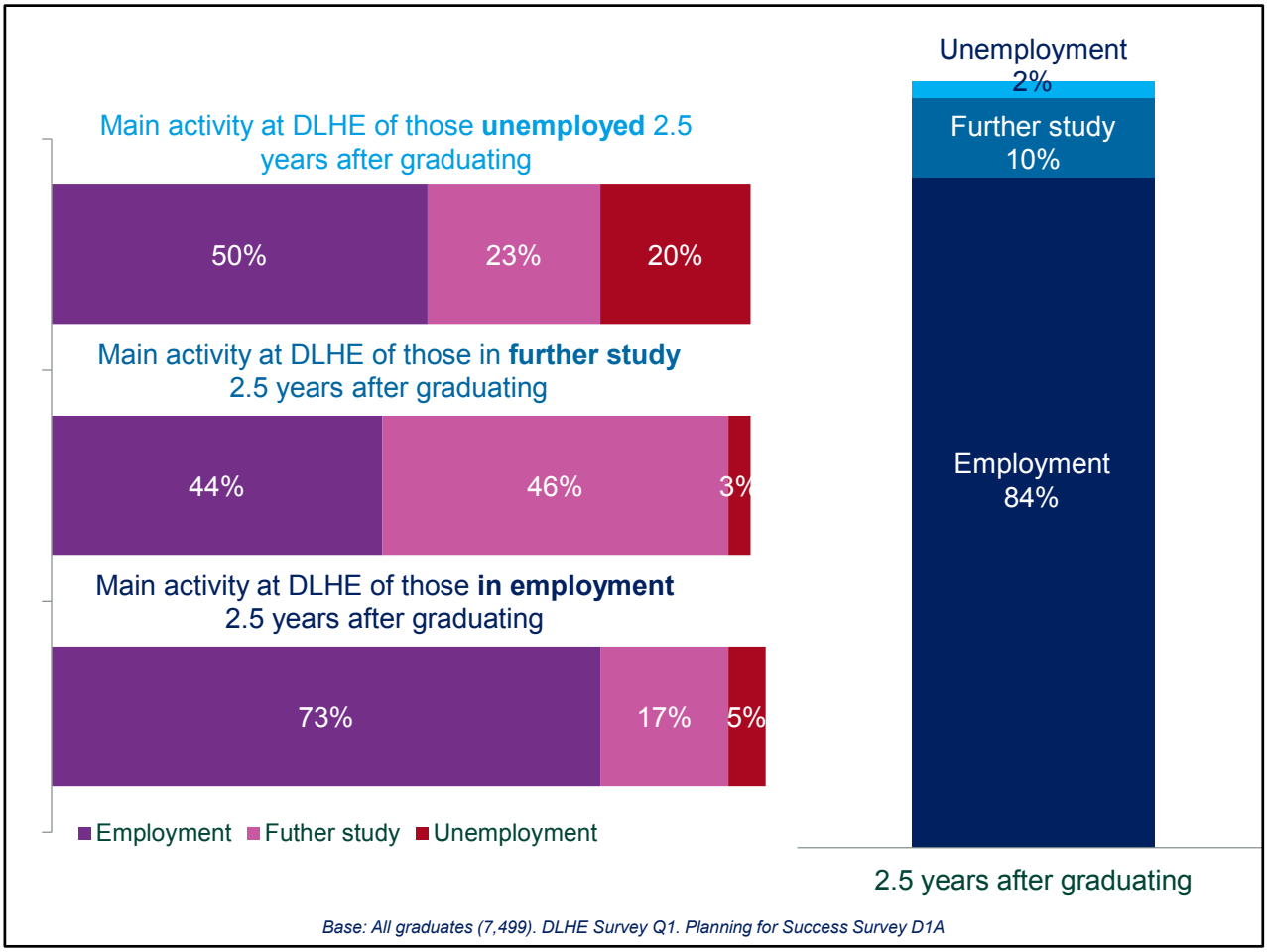


Figure 2.1 above shows the main outcomes reported by the Planning for Success Survey's graduates 2½ years after their graduation (the stacked column on the right). The bars to the left show what graduates in each outcome group were doing two years previously, at the six month stage as reported in the DLHE survey.

Two years on, the vast majority of graduates – 84 per cent - described themselves as primarily in employment. This represented an increase of 14 percentage points since DLHE. Of those in employment 2.5 years on from leaving university, approaching one-fifth (17%) had been in further study at DLHE and five per cent unemployed.

One in ten graduates (10 per cent) described further study as their main activity at the two and a half year point, 46 per cent of which were graduates who went into further study immediately after graduation, and who were therefore studying at the DLHE stage.

Those who reported that they were in further study also included a small number of graduates who had previously been in work (six per cent of graduates whose main activity at DLHE was employment were in further study two years on) and an even smaller number of graduates who had been unemployed at the DLHE point (five per cent of these were in study two years later).

The vast majority of those who moved into further study from other activities (86 per cent) had considered the option of further study at the time they graduated, but came to it through a circuitous route.

Only a very small minority of the cohort were unemployed (two per cent), compared to 6 percent at the six-month DLHE stage.

Graduates in employment

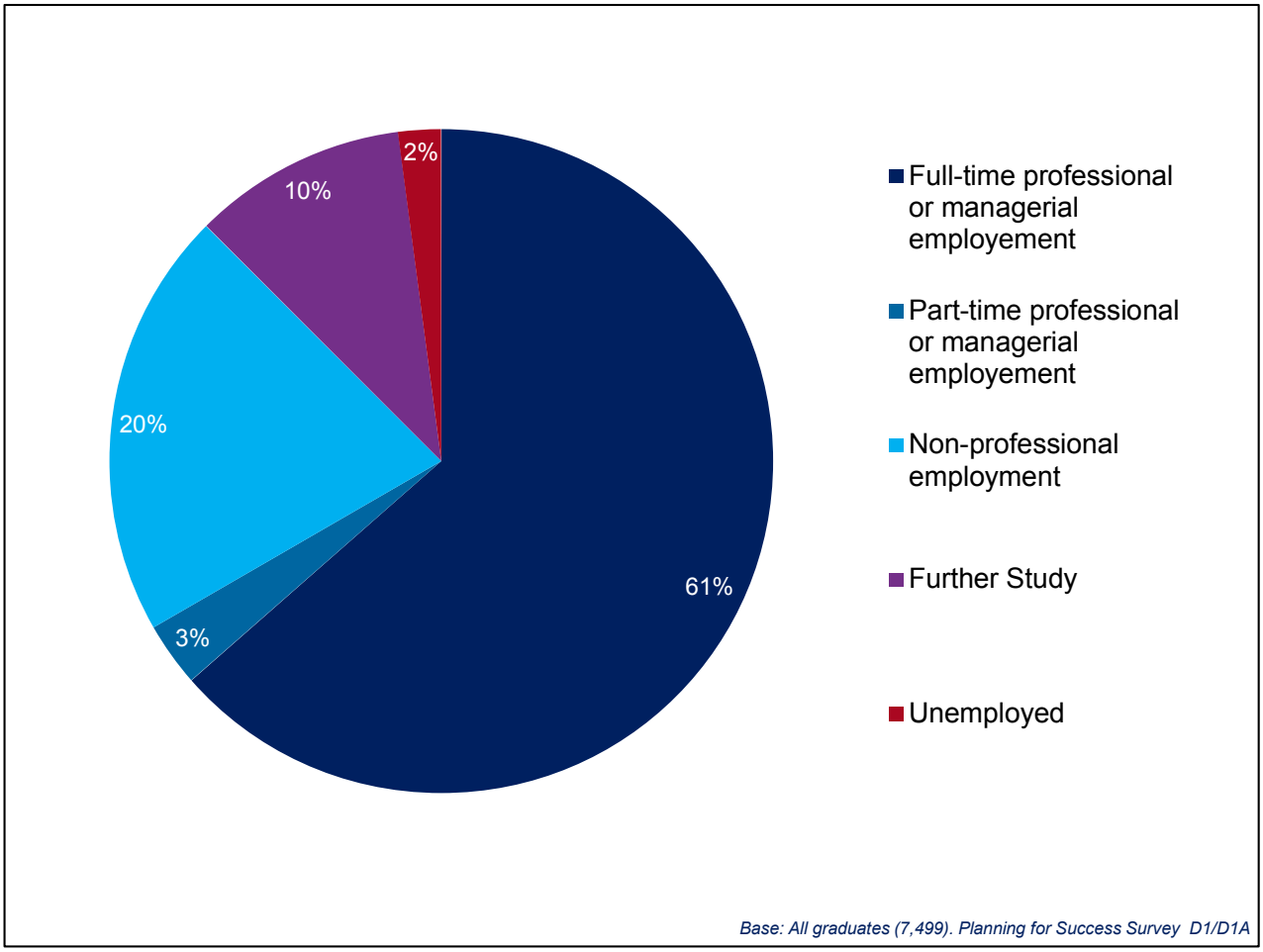
The survey explored in some depth the nature of the employment that graduates were engaged in, establishing the basis for their employment, their job title and their salary.

Of particular interest is the extent to which graduates had been able to secure "professional or managerial roles", defined here as jobs categorised in the top three 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes (Managers, directors and senior officials; Professional occupations; and Associate professional and technical occupations).

Figure 2.2 shows that almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of all graduates were working in a professional or managerial occupation, 61 per cent full-time and three per cent part-time[10]. One in five graduates (20 per cent), were working in non-professional occupations (SOC codes 4-9).

[10] This equates to 76 per cent of all graduates whose main activity was employment in this survey.

Figure 2.2 Employment status of those in the Planning for Success Survey



It is reasonably common for graduates to take time to move into professional or managerial level employment. Table 2.1 below illustrates this by showing how careers develop over time. Each column shows how the careers of each of the core DLHE outcome group had evolved by the time of our survey, two years later. The first column of data shows that four out of five of those who were in professional or managerial employment six months after graduation remained in this level of employment two years later.

Critically, this analysis shows that almost half of those who were employed in non-professional employment six months after graduation (45 per cent) had secured a professional or managerial level role two years later. The greatest movement into professional or managerial employment between the two surveys was among those who had previously been engaged in further study (56 per cent).

Table 2.1 Graduates' main outcomes at DLHE and two years on

		Main activity at DLHE				
		Professional or managerial emp't	Non-professional emp't	Further study	Unemp'd	Other
	Base	*3,473*	*1,697*	*1,494*	*415*	*417*
Main activity 2.5 years after graduation	**Professional or managerial emp't**	80%	45%	56%	52%	51%
	Non-professional emp't	11%	39%	14%	30%	25%
	Further study	5%	9%	24%	5%	12%
	Unemp'd	1%	2%	3%	8%	3%
	Other	3%	4%	4%	5%	9%

More than half (52 per cent) of graduates who were unemployed at DLHE were in a professional or managerial role by the Planning for Success Survey stage and again this was significantly higher than the proportion who had moved from non-professional employment to professional or managerial employment (45 per cent). It may have been the case that rather than enter into an occupation they did not want to be doing, this group preferred to wait and remain unemployed and actively seek their preferred type of (professional level) work.

A further three in ten (30 per cent) of those graduates who were unemployed at DLHE had moved into non-professional employment by the Planning for Success Survey stage and this represented the biggest movement into non-professional employment by any of the other DLHE outcome groups.

Two-fifths (39 per cent) of those who were in non-professional employment remained so by the time of the Planning for Success Survey. Perhaps most surprisingly, around one in ten graduates who had secured professional or managerial employment six months out had moved to non-professional employment two years later.

Fewer than one in ten (eight per cent) of those who were unemployed at DLHE remained so at the Planning for Success Survey while just three per cent of those who were studying at DLHE were unemployed at the subsequent survey point.

Demographic differences in graduates' outcomes

There was some variation in the outcomes achieved by graduates with different characteristics. The greatest variation was reported in terms of main activity (employment, further study or other activity), and it did not always correspond that those graduates who were more likely to be in employment were also more likely to be in professional or managerial occupations.

Table 2.2 summarises the differences in outcomes by sub-group and comparing those at the DLHE stage with the outcomes at the Planning for Success Survey stage, 2 years later.

Table 2.2 Demographic differences in graduates' outcomes

Group		DLHE (6 months after graduation)	Planning for Success Survey (2½ years after graduation)	
			All PSS cohort	All PSS cohort in professional or managerial employment
Unweighted base:		**Base: 7,499**	**Base: 7,499**	**Base: 4,803**
Main activity	**Employment**	**70%**	**84%**	
	professional or managerial employment	**47%**	**64%**	
	Further study	**19%**	**10%**	
	Unemployment	**6%**	**2%**	
Main activity by Gender	**Employment**	More likely among female graduates (71% vs 68% of male graduates)	As likely among male (83%) and female (84%) graduates	More likely among male graduates (67% vs 62%)
	Further study		More likely among male graduates (11% in further study vs 9% of female graduates)	
	Unemployment	More likely among male graduates (7% vs 5%)	More likely among male graduates (3% unemployed vs 2% of female graduates)	
Main activity by Socio Economic Classification (SEC)	**Employment**	More likely among graduates from households in lower supervisory and technical occupations (77%)	More likely among graduates from households in routine occupations (90%)	More likely among graduates in higher managerial and professional occupations (66%) and least likely small employers and account workers (60%)

Group		DLHE (6 months after graduation)	Planning for Success **Survey (2½ years after graduation)**	
			All PSS cohort	**All PSS cohort in professional or managerial employment**
Unweighted base:		**Base: 7,499**	**Base: 7,499**	**Base: 4,803**
Main activity	**Employment**	**70%**	**84%**	
	professional or managerial employment	**47%**	**64%**	
	Further study	**19%**	**10%**	
	Unemployment	**6%**	**2%**	
	Further study	More likely among graduates whose parents worked in higher managerial and professional occupations (21%)	More likely among graduates from households in higher managerial and professional occupations (12%)	
Main activity by TRAC Group	**Employment**	More likely among graduates of TRAC Group F universities (78%)	More likely among graduates of TRAC Group C-F universities (87%)	More likely among graduates of TRAC A (66%), TRAC B (68%) and TRAC C (69%)
	Further study	More likely among graduates of TRAC Group A and B universities (24% and 26%)	More likely among graduates of TRAC Group A universities (16%)	
	Unemployment	More likely among graduates of TRAC Group E universities (10%)		
Main activity by Subject	**Employment**	More likely among graduates of: • Medicine and Dentistry (77%) • Engineering and Architecture (77%) • Creative Arts and Design (76%)	More likely among graduates of: • Business, Law and Education (91%) • Social Studies and Communications (87%) • Engineering and Architecture (87%)	More likely among graduates of: • Engineering and Architecture (79%) • Medicine and Dentistry (72%)

Group		DLHE (6 months after graduation)	Planning for Success **Survey (2½ years after graduation)**	
			All PSS cohort	**All PSS cohort in professional or managerial employment**
Unweighted base:		**Base: 7,499**	**Base: 7,499**	**Base: 4,803**
Main activity	**Employment**	**70%**	**84%**	
	professional or managerial employment	**47%**	**64%**	
	Further study	**19%**	**10%**	
	Unemployment	**6%**	**2%**	
	Further study	More likely among: • The Arts (27%) • Veterinary Sciences (25%) • Mathematics and Physical Sciences (22%)	More likely among: • Medicine and Dentistry (18%) • Biological and Veterinary Sciences graduates (18%)	
Main activity by Degree classification	**Employment**	More likely among graduates awarded lower class degrees (79% achieving a Third)	More likely among graduates awarded lower class degrees (90% achieving a Third)	More likely among graduate awarded higher class degrees (64% achieving a First and 65% a 2:1 vs. 60% a 2:2)
	Further study	More likely among graduates awarded higher class degrees (26% achieving a First)	Further study more likely among graduates awarded higher class degrees (17% achieving a First)	

Although men were no more likely to report employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage, when they were in employment, this tended to be in professional or managerial roles. They were significantly more likely to be in professional or managerial employment than their female counterparts (67 per cent compared to 62 per cent) and also more likely to be in full-time employment at this level specifically (64 per cent and 59 per cent respectively).

Non-professional employment was explored in further detail as part of the qualitative study. This aimed to gain a better insight into whether university leavers distinguish between professional and managerial and non-professional roles, the importance of any such distinction and the perceived value of non-professional employment.

Employment was more likely at both the DLHE and Planning for Success survey stage for those graduates from households in lower supervisory and technical occupations.

However despite this increased likelihood of employment, graduates from households in higher managerial and professional occupations were more likely to be employed in professional or managerial occupations than graduates from other SEC backgrounds.

A similar pattern was seen when looking at graduate activities by TRAC group. Graduates who had studied at TRAC group C-F universities were more likely to be in employment at the Planning for Success survey stage. However graduates from TRAC groups A-C were more likely to be in professional or managerial occupations.

Findings from the qualitative exercise show that graduates were aware of the distinction between professional and managerial roles and non-professional roles but did not always regard this classification of roles as important. Of greater concern to those in non-professional roles was moving into or closer to the area of work in which they intended to be working longer term.

"Working in a non-graduate role is not something that bothers me too much. I'm more bothered by the fact that working as a teaching assistant is not an area that I want to go into, and I feel like maybe I need to start looking at areas that I'm interested in."

Female Physical Sciences graduate

"For me I'd rather be doing something relevant to my degree rather than something that's a graduate job."

Female Social Studies graduate

All of those interviewed at the qualitative stage who were in non-professional employment were aware when they took the role that it was a non-professional position and tended to apply simply because they needed to earn a living or as a stop-gap.

"I took the job as a means of supporting myself while looking for a web design job."

Male Languages graduate

For one leaver her time in a non-professional role was substitute for the work experience that she chose not to do whilst at university.

"I took this job to get office experience, a pre-requisite of most jobs."

Female graduate who studied combined subjects

Most expected to leave their non-professional occupation within the next 12 months and to move into a role more aligned to their longer term career aspirations. However,

Findings from the qualitative exercise show that graduates were aware of the distinction between professional and managerial roles and non-professional roles but did not always regard this classification of roles as important. Of greater concern to those in non-professional roles was moving into or closer to the area of work in which they intended to be working longer term.

a few acknowledged that their non-professional role had been a valuable experience and allowed them to forge new and develop existing skills.

"Within the next six months I would like to have found a 'career-type' job. My current job is a stepping stone and may help with future plans as it has provided me with experience of recruiting staff, organisation and administration, management."

Male Physical Sciences graduate

Occupational breakdown

A more detailed occupational profile is provided in Table 2.3. Rows shaded in light blue denote professional or managerial level occupations (based on the top three SOC groupings) and those not shaded denote non-professional occupations. Percentages are presented on a base of all graduates who were in employment two and a half years after graduation[11].

Most commonly graduates worked in business and public service associate roles – this was the case for a fifth (20 per cent) of those whose main activity was employment. Roughly equal proportions worked in professional or managerial level roles as;

- Teaching and educational professionals (12 per cent);
- Business, media and public service professionals (11 per cent);
- Administrative occupations (11 per cent).

The most common non-professional occupations included caring and personal service, and sales roles (both three per cent).

[11] To accurately record occupational information, graduates were asked to provide their full job title and a description of the duties entailed. These responses were then coded against the SOC2010 classifications.

Table 2.3 Occupational profile of all graduates in employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage

D4/D5. Occupational profile of those in employment	
All whose main activity was employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage (6,266)	%
Business and public service associate professionals	20
Teaching and educational professionals	12
Business, media and public service professionals	11
Administrative occupations	11
Science, research, engineering and technology professionals	9
Health professionals	6
Culture, media and sports occupations	5
Science, engineering and technology associate professionals	4
Caring, personal service occupations	3
Sales occupations	3
Corporate managers and directors	3
Health and social care associate professionals	2
Customer service occupations	2
Other managers and proprietors	2
Secretarial and related occupations	1
Elementary administration and service occupations	1
Protective service occupations	1
Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations	1
Textiles, printing and other skilled trades	1

Occupational trends by subject studied

As one would expect, there was a strong correlation between the subject studied and the occupation that they were working in.

- Three-fifths (61 per cent) of those who studied Medicine and Dentistry were working as health professionals. The next most common roles for these graduates to be working in were as science, research, engineering and technology professionals and as business and public service associate professionals (both seven per cent).

- Almost half (47 per cent) of Engineering and Architecture graduates were working as science, engineering and technology professionals, but a further 13 per cent were in business, media and public service professional roles.

- Three in ten (31 per cent) of Business, Law and Education graduates were working as business and public service associate professionals while just under half this again (14 per cent) worked in administrative roles.

However there were a few subject areas for which occupational profiles were slightly less focussed and more varied:

- The Arts – 23 per cent went into business and public service associate professional roles and slightly lower proportions as teaching and educational professionals (17 per cent), business, media and public service professionals and in administrative occupations (both 15 per cent).

- Creative Arts – around one-quarter (26 per cent) moved into culture, media and sports occupations and fewer still into teaching and educational roles (13 per cent), administrative occupations and business and public service associate roles (both 12 per cent).

Occupational trends by gender

There were also clear differences in occupation by gender, which are to be expected given that male graduates were more likely to be working in professional or managerial level positions. In terms of specific occupational profile, male graduates were:

- more than three times as likely to be working in science, research, engineering and technology professional roles (16 per cent and six per cent in associate professionals compared to five per cent and two per cent respectively for female graduates);

- more likely to be employed in business and public service associate roles (22 per cent compared to 19 per cent of females);

- more likely to be employed in business, media and public service professional roles (12 per cent compared to 10 per cent).

Female graduates on other hand were around three times more likely than their male counterparts to be working as teaching and education professionals (17 per cent compared to six per cent). This is in line with the finding at the DLHE that female graduates who were in study were considerably more likely than their male counterparts to have been working towards a postgraduate diploma or certificate including PGCEs.

Other professional or managerial roles that women were more likely to be working in than men at the Planning for Success Survey stage were administrative occupations (12 per cent compared to nine per cent) and as health professionals (nine per cent and three per cent respectively).

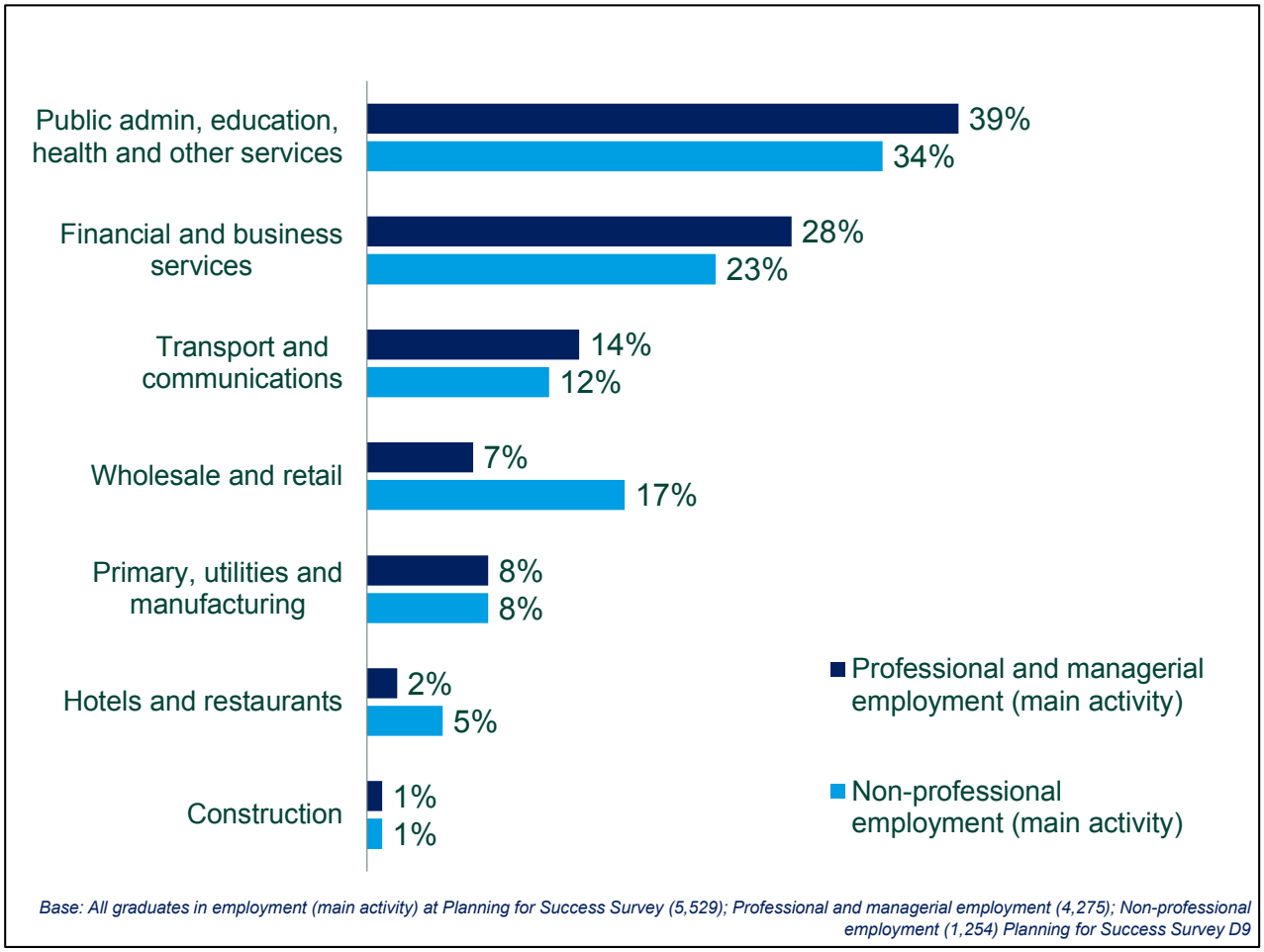
Female graduates in employment were more likely to be working in non-professional positions in caring, personal service occupations (five per cent of female graduates compared to one per cent of male graduates) and sales occupations (four per cent and two per cent respectively).

Sector

Figure 2.3 shows the sectors that graduates were working in two and a half years after their graduation, and how this varied between those in professional or managerial roles

and those in non-professional roles[12]. In broad terms, the hierarchy of sectors was the same for both: graduates most often worked in public admin, education, health and other services, whether in a professional or managerial level job or not (39 per cent whose main activity was professional or managerial employment and 34 per cent of those in non-professional roles). The second most common sector of employment was financial and business services, and again this was the case for those in professional and managerial roles and non-professional roles (28 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). Those in non-professional roles were more than twice as likely to work in the retail sector, however (17 per cent compared to seven per cent of those in professional or managerial positions) or the hotels and restaurant sector (five per cent and two per cent respectively).

Figure 2.3 Sector profile of those employed at the Planning for Success Survey stage



Base: All graduates in employment (main activity) at Planning for Success Survey (5,529); Professional and managerial employment (4,275); Non-professional employment (1,254) Planning for Success Survey D9

[12] The initial questionnaire omitted to collect information relating to the sector of employment for those who were who were not in employment at DLHE but had moved into employment by the Planning for Success Survey stage. A call-back exercise was conducted to collect this data which achieved a good response but still left some responses outstanding. Sector data are presented here for 5,685 of the 6,434 graduates (88 per cent of all required responses).

There were some gender disparities in terms of the sectors that graduates in this cohort were working in. Male graduates who were in employment were more likely to be working in the financial and business services sector (31 per cent compared to 24 per cent of female graduates); they were also almost twice as likely to be working in transport and communications (18 per cent compared to 10 per cent) or in the primary, utilities and manufacturing sector (12 per cent compared to six per cent).

Conversely, female graduates who were in employment were almost twice as likely as their male peers to be working in the public administration, education, health sector (47 per cent and 25 per cent respectively).

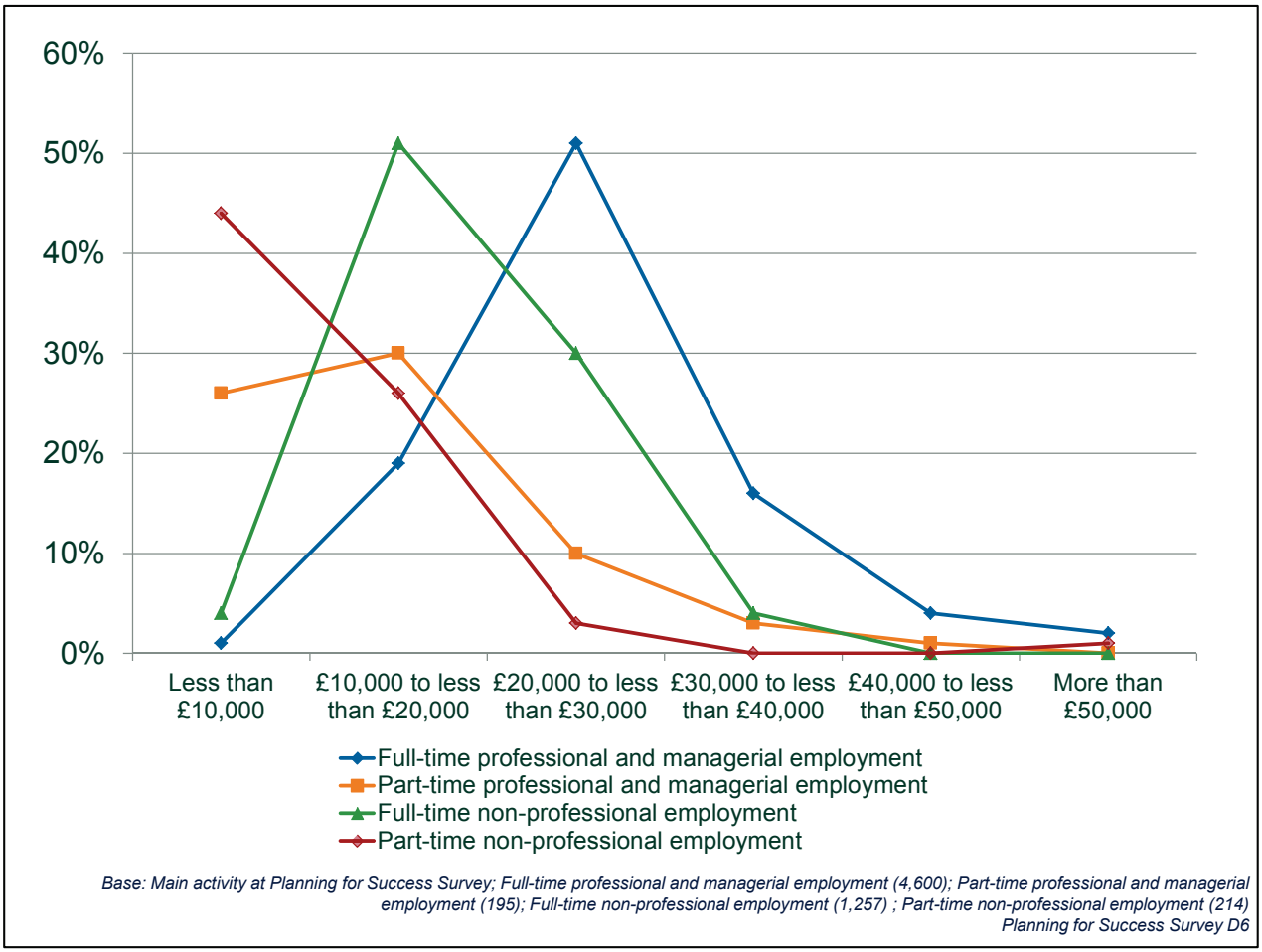
Likewise some differences in sector were apparent according to the class of qualification awarded. Employed graduates who achieved first-class degrees were more likely to be working in transport and communications (18 per cent compared to 13 per cent overall) and the primary, utilities and manufacturing sector (12 per cent and eight per cent respectively). This is likely reflects that those studying Maths and Physical Sciences and Engineering and Architecture subjects were more likely to have achieved a first class degree. Graduates who attended TRAC Group A universities were also more likely to be working in these sectors, and is linked to these graduates being more likely to have achieved higher degree classifications.

Salary

Graduates in our cohort that reported being in employment were asked for the details of the salary they received. In the main, graduates were happy to share this, although those in part-time roles were more reluctant. Findings are shown in Table 2.4 and are split by full-time and part-time employment within professional and managerial roles and non-professional roles. All findings have been rounded to the nearest £50.

Table 2.5 shows that those working in professional and managerial occupations earned on average significantly higher wages than those in non-professional roles. On average, those in full-time professional and managerial roles earned over £6,500 more than those in full-time non-professional positions. Whereas, half (51 per cent) of those in full-time professional and managerial roles earned a salary between £20,000 and £30,000, the same proportion in full-time non-professional roles earned between £10,000 and £20,000.

Likewise, graduates in part-time professional and managerial roles earned, on average, in excess of £2,500 more than their counterparts in non-professional roles. The vast majority of leavers (70 per cent) in part-time non-professional roles earned less than £20,000, whereas this was the case for less than three-fifths (56 per cent) of those in professional or managerial roles.



Base: Main activity at Planning for Success Survey; Full-time professional and managerial employment (4,600); Part-time professional and managerial employment (195); Full-time non-professional employment (1,257) ; Part-time non-professional employment (214)
Planning for Success Survey D6

Figure 2.4 Annual net salaries of graduates in employment two and a half years after graduation

Table 2.4 Salary levels of Planning for Success study graduates in employment two and a half years after graduation

Salary information				
Base	*In full-time professional or managerial employment (main activity)*	*In full-time non-professional employment (main activity)*	*In part-time professional or managerial employment (main activity)*	*In part-time non-professional employment (main activity)*
	(4,600)	*(1,257)*	*(195)*	*(214)*
Less than £10,000	1%	4%	26%	44%
£10,000 to less than £20,000	19%	51%	30%	26%
£20,000 to less than £30,000	51%	30%	10%	3%
£30,000 to less than £40,000	16%	4%	3%	-
£40,000 to less than £50,000	4%	<1%	1%	-
More than £50,000	2%	<1%	-	1%
Mean	**£25,500**	**£18,850**	**£13,050**	**£10,400**
Professional or managerial occupation premium	**+35%**		**+25%**	
Unpaid role	*1%*	*1%*	*9%*	*2%*
Refused	*6%*	*9%*	*22%*	*24%*

Progression in the workplace

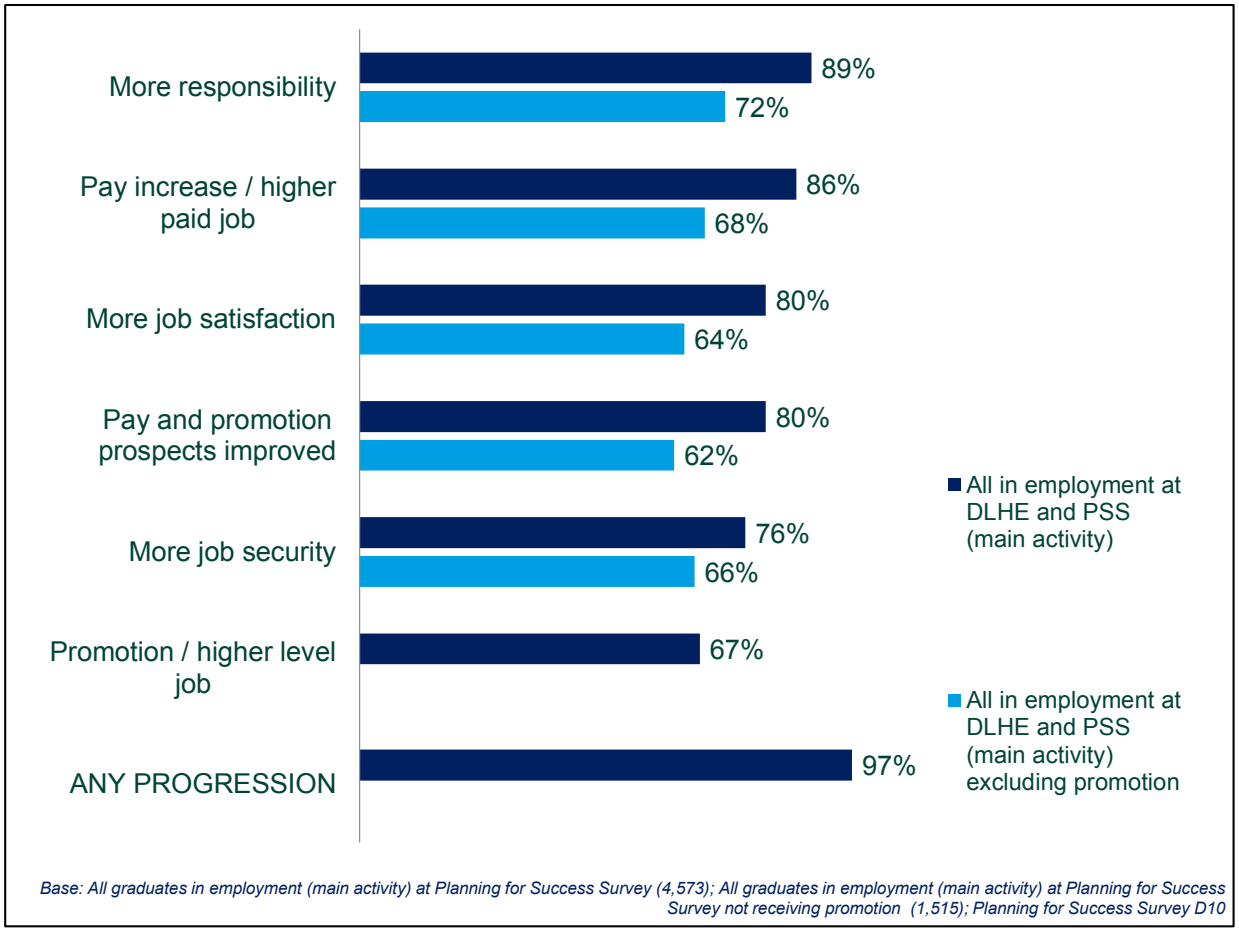
Just over three-fifths (62 per cent) of all graduates classed employment as their main activity both at the DLHE point six months after graduation and in this study, two years later. Of those reporting employment at both survey points, just under half (48 per cent) worked for the same employer in both surveys (equating to 29 per cent of all graduates).

To better understand the career progression since DLHE, graduates in employment at both points were asked in what ways their role or prospects had improved. Figure 2.5 below shows the proportions of graduates reporting progression in six key areas.

Most commonly graduates reported being assigned more responsibility at work (89 per cent) and / or an increase in pay (86 per cent) since DLHE. Less common, but still a significant proportion reported a formal promotion (66 per cent), so while graduates reported having increased responsibilities this was not always rewarded with a more senior role.

As there might be some overlap in graduates stating they received promotion in conjunction with other another benefit (e.g. a pay rise or increase in responsibilities), Figure 2.5 also shows the proportion of graduates who stated progression in each way ***excluding*** those who were promoted (light blue bars). It is on this graduate cohort that the remainder of the analysis in this section is based.

Figure 2.5 Progression in the workplace since DLHE



Base: All graduates in employment (main activity) at Planning for Success Survey (4,573); All graduates in employment (main activity) at Planning for Success Survey not receiving promotion (1,515); Planning for Success Survey D10

Approaching three-quarters (72 per cent) of these remaining graduates reported more responsibility in their job. Roughly equal proportions either received a pay increase (68 per cent) and / or more job security (66 per cent), while slightly lower proportions said they received more job satisfaction (64 per cent) or believed their pay and promotion prospects had improved since DLHE (62 per cent).

As might be expected, differences prevailed according to the type and level of work: those who were working in professional or managerial roles were more likely to report progressing in every respect compared to those working in non-professional roles.

Sector also had some bearing. Graduates who worked in the manufacturing and construction sector two and a half years after graduation were more likely to report gaining more responsibility (81 per cent) and a pay increase (76 per cent) and those who worked in business and finance, better pay *and* promotion prospects (70 per cent).

Linked to this, variations were also apparent according to subject studied. Engineering and architecture graduates stated they had been afforded more responsibility (84 per cent) and / or a pay increase (77 per cent), graduates of business, law and education enjoyed more job security (71 per cent) and those who studied more vocational subjects, specifically social studies and communications, reported more job satisfaction (70 per cent).

Progression in the workplace was closely linked with academic achievement. Those who were awarded a first-class degree were more likely to report advancing their careers in all respects with the exception of job security and **actually** gaining a promotion:

- Gaining more responsibility (78 per cent of those awarded a first-class degree compared to 72 per cent overall);
- An increase in pay (73 per cent and 68 per cent);
- Greater job satisfaction (71 per cent compared to 64 per cent);
- Better pay *and* promotion prospects (70 per cent versus 62 per cent).

There were some differences by gender; with men more likely to report progression in some areas. They were more likely to state the level of responsibility in their job role had increased by the Planning for Success Survey stage (77 per cent compared to 69 per cent of female graduates) and / or that their pay and promotion prospects had improved (66 per cent and 60 per cent respectively).

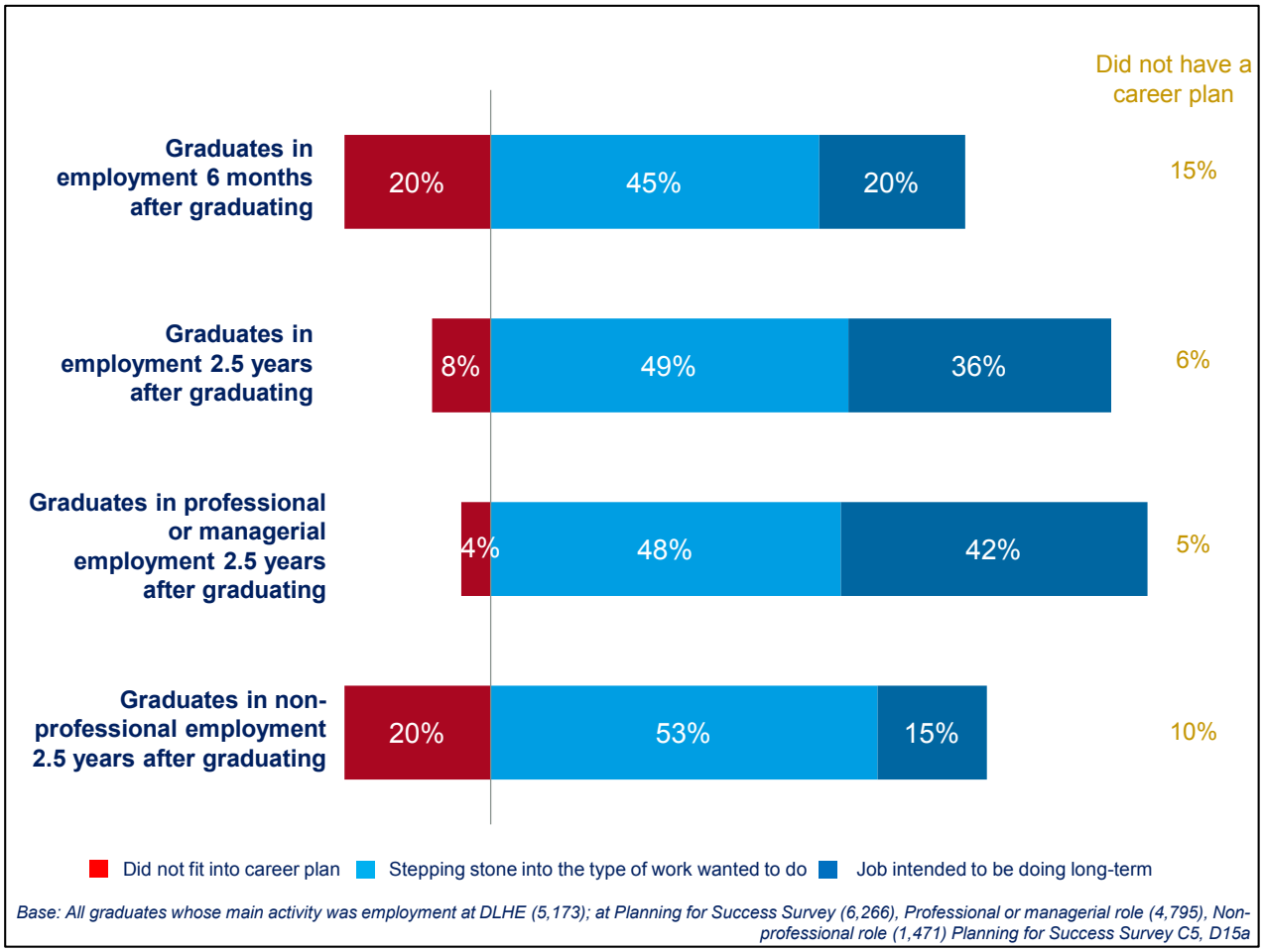
Suitability of main employment outcome at the Planning for Success Survey stage to graduates' long term career goals

To better understand how much of their career plan they had realised two and a half years after completing their undergraduate degree, graduates were asked to describe how the job they were doing at the Planning for Success Survey point fitted into their longer term career goals. This is shown in Figure 2.6 which also summarises how this differed between those working in professional or managerial and non-professional roles. For a temporal comparison, graduates' perception of the suitability of their job at DLHE (two years prior) is shown in the top bar. Findings are based on all whose main outcome was employment at either point.

At DLHE six months after graduation, one-fifth (20 per cent) of graduates whose main activity was employment regarded this job as one they intended to be doing in the long term. The same proportion did not believe their job fitted into their career plan and more than double (45 per cent) considered the role to be a stepping stone into the type of work they wanted to be doing.

However two years later, the proportion working in the job they intended to be doing long term had increased by more than two-thirds to 36 per cent and only eight per cent did not have a career plan at this time. The proportion that regarded their role as transitional at the Planning for Success Survey stage (49 per cent) was slightly higher than at DLHE (45 per cent).

Figure 2.6 Suitability of employment at Planning for Success Survey stage to long term career plans or goals



Base: All graduates whose main activity was employment at DLHE (5,173); at Planning for Success Survey (6,266), Professional or managerial role (4,795), Non-professional role (1,471) Planning for Success Survey C5, D15a

At the Planning for Success Survey stage, those in non-professional roles were much more likely to view their job as a means to an end and did not regard this as their final destination. More than half (53 per cent) saw their role as a stepping stone into the type of work they wanted to be dong in the long term, while one in five (20 per cent) didn't consider the job to fit into their career plan at all.

This echoes the earlier qualitative findings which indicated those working in non-professional roles did not consider this to be related to the area in which they wanted to work, instead regarding these roles as means by which to earn money and gain experience.

It is also possible to analyse the suitability of graduates' employment according to their employment trajectory between DLHE and the Planning for Success Survey specifically:

1. Graduates who remained with the same employer between both census dates and those who switched jobs;

2. Graduates whose main activity at DLHE was further study compared to those who remained in employment (either for the same or a different employer);

3. Those who were in a professional or managerial level job at DLHE and those who only moved into a professional or managerial level job by the Planning for Success Survey point.

Those who were in the **same job** at DLHE and two years later were three times more likely than graduates who were in employment at both census dates but for **different employers**, to state at DLHE that this was the job they intended to be doing in the long-term (34 per cent and 11 per cent respectively).

Being in study at DLHE and therefore entering employment later, did not necessarily result in a graduate working in the role they intended to be doing in the long term at the Planning for Success Survey stage. Those whose main activity at DLHE was further study were as likely to be doing the job they intended to be doing long-term at the Planning for Success Survey stage as those whose main activity was employment at both DLHE and the Planning for Success Survey (39 per cent and 37 per cent respectively). Indeed they were less likely to consider their job at the Planning for Success Survey stage as a stepping stone into the type of work they wanted to be doing long-term (46 per cent compared to 50 per cent of those who were in employment at DLHE) and more likely to regard the job as not related to their career aspirations (nine per cent compared to seven per cent).

Differences between graduates identified in the third of the three groups (those who were in a professional or managerial level job at DLHE and those who only moved into a professional or managerial level job by the Planning for Success Survey point) were less marked. However, there is some evidence that those who only secured professional or managerial level employment at the Planning for Success Survey point (after being in non-professional employment at DLHE) were slightly more likely to consider their professional or managerial role to not be related to their career plans (six per cent) compared to those who were already in professional or managerial employment at DLHE (four per cent).

Graduates in further study

Two and a half years after graduation, 15 per cent of our cohort was engaged in some form of study and this was the main activity for one in ten (10 per cent). This next section of the report focused on those who classed further study as their main activity.

Most commonly graduates engaged in further study were working towards a higher degree mainly by research (36 per cent) while just over one quarter (27 per cent) were studying a higher degree mainly by taught course. The proportion working towards a research degree (36 per cent) had trebled since DLHE, when 13 per cent of graduates whose main outcome at DLHE was study, were working towards this type of qualification. This reflects

that the base of those in further study had shrunk, as those on shorter courses had completed them. Additionally, more than half (53 per cent) of graduates whose main activity at DLHE was studying towards a higher degree mainly by taught course had progressed to a research degree by the point of the Planning for Success Survey.

Table 2.5 Type of qualification studying at time of the Planning for Success Survey

Type of qualification studying towards	
All whose main activity was further study (786)	%
Higher degree, mainly by research	36
Higher degree, mainly by taught course	27
Postgraduate diploma or certificate	19
Undergraduate degree	11
Professional qualification	6
Other diploma or certificate	2
Other qualification	1

Around one fifth of the 10 per cent who classed further study as their main activity at the time of the Planning for Success Survey (19 per cent) were working towards postgraduate diplomas or certificates (including PGCEs). This was more than twice as likely among female graduates who we have previously seen were also more likely to enter into teaching occupations.

A notable minority (11 per cent) of graduates in further study two and a half years on from their graduation reported themselves to be studying towards another undergraduate degree, two years after completing this type of qualification.

Five per cent of all graduates stated they were in further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage but were also doing something else alongside (and that they did not consider study as their main activity). The vast majority who did not class study as their main activity were in employment – 85 per cent full-time and 12 per cent part-time. Most typically these graduates were studying towards a professional qualification (43 per cent) and so their study was likely a requirement of the job they were doing or another job they wanted to progress into. More than one-quarter of them (28 per cent) were studying a higher degree by taught course and one in ten (11 per cent) another unspecified type of diploma or certificate.

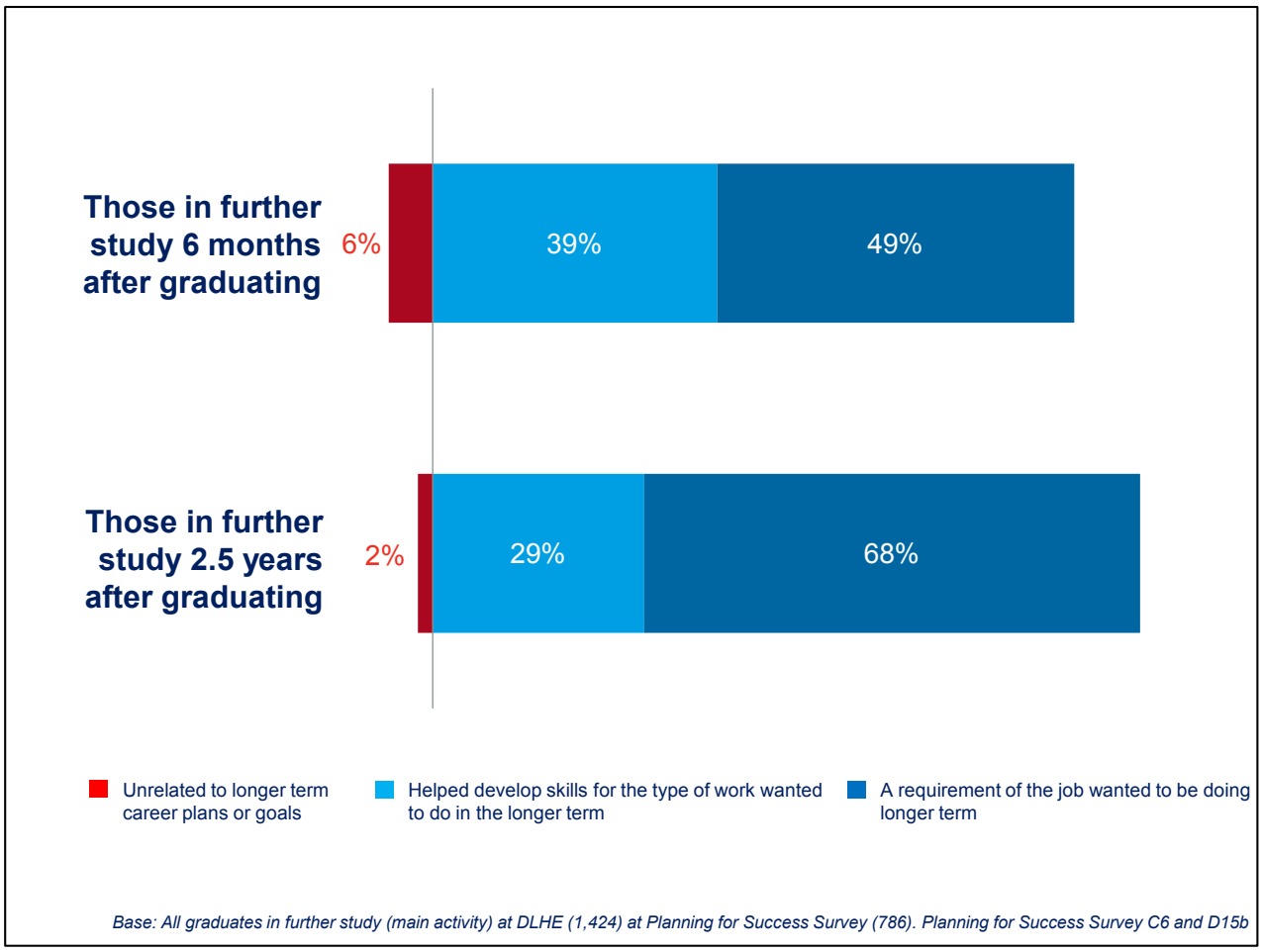
A range of subjects were studied at the Planning for Success Survey stage with the most common being Business and Administrative studies (16 per cent), Education (12 per cent) and Biological Sciences (10 per cent). There was some correlation between the type of subject studied and the type of qualification at the Planning for Success Survey point.

Graduates who were studying science subjects, specifically Physical and Biological sciences, were more likely to be undertaking research degrees (86 per cent and 57 per cent). Taught degrees were most common among those studying Architecture, Building and Planning two and a half years after graduation (88 per cent).

As with those who were in employment at the Planning for Success Survey point, those engaged in further study were asked to describe how this period of study fitted into their longer term career plans. Figure 2.7 shows how results compare for graduates whose main activity was study at the DLHE or two years later.

At the Planning for Success Survey point, more than two-thirds (68 per cent) were engaged in this study because it was a requirement of the job they wanted to be doing long-term. This was noticeably higher than at DLHE (49 per cent).

Figure 2.7 Suitability of study undertaken at Planning for Success Survey stage to long term career plans or goals



Base: All graduates in further study (main activity) at DLHE (1,424) at Planning for Success Survey (786). Planning for Success Survey C6 and D15b

The type of qualification studied at the Planning for Success Survey point had a significant bearing on how this period of study fitted into a graduate's career plan. The vast majority (95 per cent) who were studying a postgraduate diploma or certificate stated this was a requirement of the job they wanted to be doing long term.

Three in ten (29 per cent) regarded their qualification as something from which they would benefit in the long term, but not necessarily essential to the career they wanted to pursue. This was the case for more than half (53 per cent) of those whose main outcome at DLHE was unemployment and may suggest that this group re-entered education to improve their employability, because they had so far failed to secure sustained employment. Men were more likely to regard this study as helping to develop the skills for the type of job they wanted to be doing long term (33 per cent compared to 26 per cent of women).

One in fifty (two per cent) of those whose main activity at the Planning for Success Survey point was further study pursued this out of pleasure or only because they didn't know what else to do.

Graduates who were unemployed

At the Planning for Success Survey point, two per cent of all graduates reported unemployment (and looking for work) as their main status.

A very small proportion (accounting for just one per cent of all graduates), were unemployed at both the DLHE and Planning for Success Survey points. A slight majority of these (56 per cent) had worked at some point during this period but the remainder had not (44 per cent).

This means that of the two per cent of graduates who were unemployed two and a half years after graduation, just under half (46 per cent) had been unemployed for a relatively short period of time – three months or less - and a further quarter (26 per cent) for between three and six months. However, a sizeable minority (31 per cent) could be classed as long term unemployed (i.e. for more than one year), although they may well have been traveling or caring for a family member during this time in addition to looking for work[13].

Unemployment was another theme that was explored in more detail during the qualitative interviews. A sample of those who were not in work at the Planning for Success Survey point were asked how this period of unemployment came about, what career planning activity they had engaged in during this time and the perceived impact unemployment had on their career progression.

Graduates became unemployed via different routes. Some had only recently completed further study (typically a Master's Degree) subsequent to the qualification they obtained in the 2011/12 academic year and had not had sufficient time to secure a job. Others had reached the end of a fixed term contract and had not been offered an extension or permanent placement.

[13] Due to small base sizes no further subgroup analysis is possible

One leaver interviewed for the qualitative stage stated they had been in and out of a number short term retail jobs before ending up unemployed.

All of those interviewed had made job applications during their respective periods of unemployment and most had engaged in CV building activities to improve their employability.

"It's only been about a month, but I've been applying for jobs, doing some online courses."

Female Languages graduate

"I did apply to do some work experience - vacation schemes with law firms and I had a placement with Barclays Bank. It was an internship with their internal legal function but only lasted two weeks."

Male Social Studies graduate

Views were mixed as to whether the period of unemployment impacted on graduates' career plans and indeed individuals struggled to weigh up how negative their experience of unemployment had been. Graduates viewed unemployment as an opportunity to stand back and reassess their career plans, but also recognised that it had made them less self-assured or impacted negatively on them being able to secure work sooner than if they had not been working for other reasons.

"I guess in the short term it's knocked me back in terms of time it will take to get the qualification … But it has also made me more determined to stay on this career path just to prove them wrong."

Male graduate who studied combined subjects

"It might have impacted depending on how long it had lasted, but it's been a good period to re-assess what I want to do next in terms of work experience and graduate schemes."

Female Social Studies graduate

"It's been good and bad. Good because it has provided an opportunity to sign up for the Princes Trust scheme but bad because it has 'put things on hold' and stopped me from getting further experience in employment."

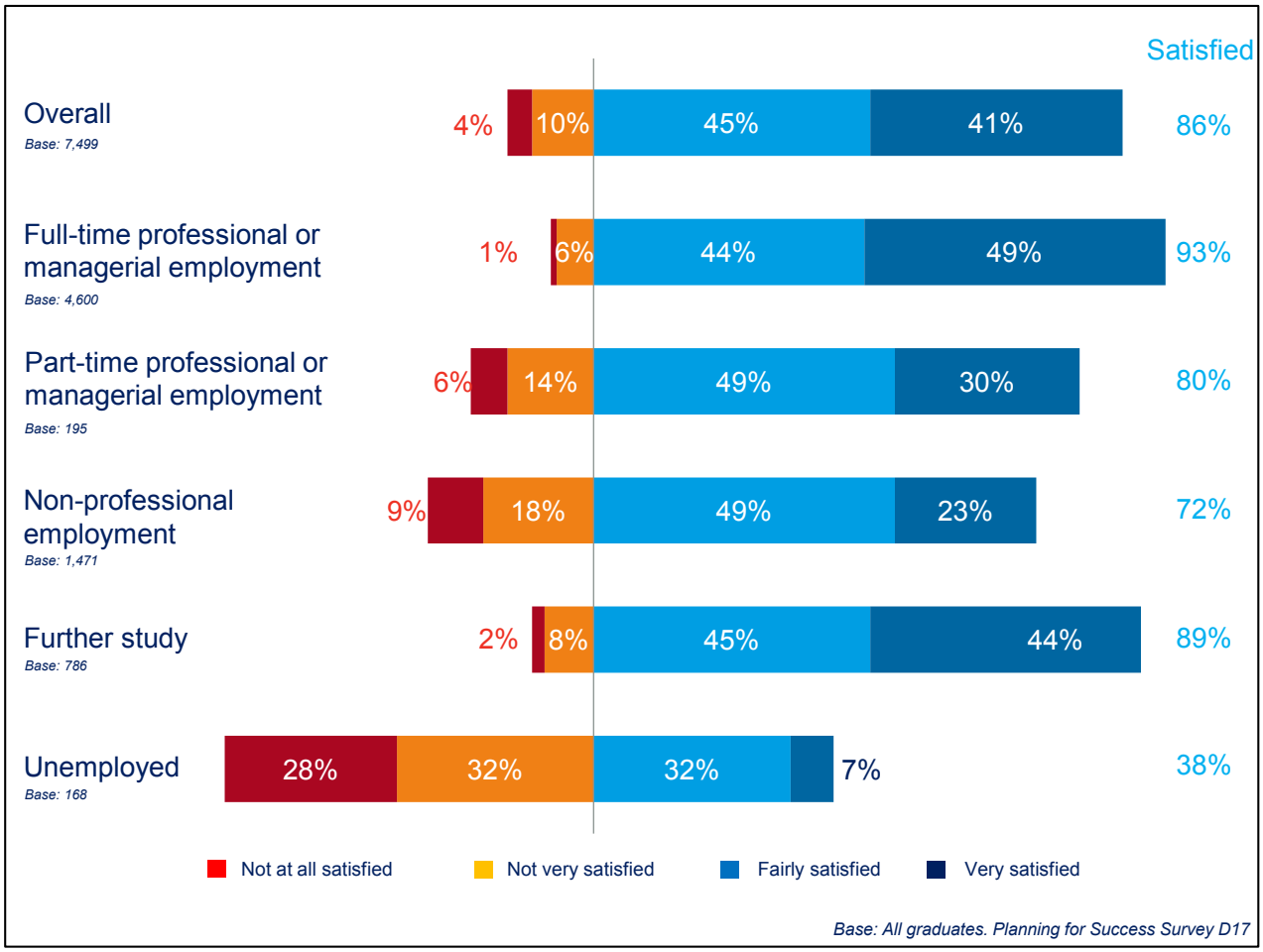
Female Business and Administrative studies graduate

Satisfaction with career to date

All graduates that responded to the survey were asked how satisfied they were with their career to date two and a half years after graduation. Results are shown in Figure 2.8 both at the overall level and for each of the main outcome groups. Overall the picture is very positive; 86 per cent of all graduates were satisfied (41 per cent very satisfied and 45 per cent quite satisfied) with what they had achieved in their career two and a half years after completing their undergraduate degree.

Satisfaction varied according to graduates' main activity at the Planning for Success Survey point ranging from 93 per cent of those in full-time professional or managerial employment, followed by leavers who were in further study (89 per cent) to less than two-fifths (38 per cent) of those who were unemployed. Of those who were working, those in non-professional roles were least satisfied (72 per cent).

Figure 2.8 Satisfaction with career to date by main outcome



Satisfaction was closely linked to the university attended and the class of degree awarded; graduates who had obtained a first-class degree at undergraduate level (90 per cent) and / or attended a university belonging to the Russell Group (89 per cent) were both more likely to be satisfied with their career to date. It should be noted that these two groups were also

more likely to state further study as their main activity at the Planning for Success Survey point.

Despite being more likely to work in a full-time professional or managerial role or be engaged in further study, male graduates were no more likely be satisfied with their career to date than females (both 86 per cent). Indeed female graduates were more likely to be **very** satisfied than their male counterparts (43 per cent compared to 39 per cent).

Of particular note are the seven per cent of graduates whose main outcome was unemployment at the Planning for Success Survey stage and stated they were very satisfied with their career to date. Of this very specific group of graduates, the vast majority had stated that their main outcome at DLHE was employment (either full-time – 53 per cent - or part-time – 16 per cent). Similarly, the majority (70 per cent) had been unemployed for no more than five months leading up to the Planning for Success Survey point and maybe disregarded this relatively brief period of unemployment when considering how satisfied they were with the whole of their career to date.

The qualitative stage provided an opportunity to further explore graduates' satisfaction with their career to date. The in-depth interviews allowed a more detailed discussion around how graduates measure success and what they consider when reflecting on career satisfaction.

The qualitative follow-up revealed that career satisfaction was generally determined in the context of employment outcomes and specifically against three key measures:

1. Relevance of the job or sector to a graduates' degree or general career plan
2. Day to day enjoyment of the job role
3. Evidenced progression especially in terms of increased responsibility, exerting influence and financial remuneration

Those dissatisfied with their career by the Planning for Success Survey point often felt this way because what they were doing was not related to their university degree or their area of interest.

"I'm not using my degree. I really enjoyed law so I'd like to be working in something that I can use it and enjoy it. At the moment I don't enjoy the job I'm doing."

Female Law graduate

"I did my degree in Forensic Science and I'm now not working in science at all, I'm working in financial services. So my career path from university has not been a very successful one."

Male Physical Sciences graduate

It was common for those graduates who were in work but dissatisfied with their career so far to feel that they had not progressed at the organisation as far as they would have liked or expected to by the Planning for Success Survey point.

"The company I am working at didn't set out a structured progression ladder for me. I've seen some progression but not a lot since I started this job. I wasn't very happy with that...I'm quite ambitious and I like learning and it hasn't really challenged me."

Female Mass Communications and Documentation graduate

In contrast, those who were satisfied with their career remarked positively upon these aspects of their roles. This included their rate of progression and the associated benefits, such as increased responsibilities and promotion, but moreover demonstrated a genuine enjoyment for their work they did.

"I'm in a field that I wanted to be in and it's a job that covers most things that I wanted to do."

Female Physical Sciences graduate

"The reason I'm happy with where I've come is firstly I'm in a job now which I thought would take me at least a couple of more years for me to get to, and I've been given the responsibility and accountability to manage some prominent businesses within this company... I've had some internal wins within the company that I've been really proud of, in terms of results I've gained. And then those results have led to me getting different promotions and that's what I'm most proud of."

Female Business and Administrative studies graduate

"I guess the benchmark of success for me is job satisfaction. You can write-off the rest if you actually get enjoyment and meaning from what you do."

Male Biological Sciences graduate

In addition to reflecting on what they had achieved by the Planning for Success Survey point, those graduates who were 'satisfied' with their career were asked what factors they considered important in helping them to get to where they were.

Determination was deemed important for many.

"I think drive. I think there are a lot of graduates who think they're going to get it handed on a plate, in that they think their degree is everything and it's not. I think that's the reason why there are so many people out there who

haven't got a job or are in a job that they didn't intend to get because they're not putting enough weight behind their own actions."

Female Business and Administrative studies graduate

Although important, qualifications were considered subsidiary by some to work experience and other CV additions, which were regarded as key to proving your relevance and worth as a potential employee.

"By the time I left university I had a decent CV and it helped me stand out. That's what my employers have said. Getting that balance right, getting a bit of work experience here and there but knuckling down and making sure I came out with a good degree has put me in very good stead."

Male Social studies graduate

"Experience. It's not so much about the actual qualifications, though they're welcomed, it's more about the experience you have. Work experience is key."

Female Biological Sciences graduate

This chapter has identified four key different outcomes for graduates two and half years after leaving university. The majority of graduates were in employment, with almost two-thirds – 64% working in professional or managerial level occupations. The next chapter will revisit the point upon starting university and explore graduate's reasons and motivations for going to university in the first place and the extent to which they had an established career plan at that time.

Chapter 3 Career plans upon starting university

Having looked at where graduates ended up two and a half years after graduation at the Planning for Success Survey point, the next few sections look to trace how graduates progressed their career planning from the point of applying to university, through their university career and in the six months after graduation.

Chapter Summary

Improving employability in general or the pursuit of a specific career was the main driver behind the decision to study at university for most graduates, with academic interest less likely to be the main motivation. However, when choosing a specific subject it was personal interest which was more likely to be the deciding factor.

At the point of applying to university, graduates were evenly split between those with a career plan and those without, although almost one in five (18 per cent) knew exactly which job or career they wanted to pursue.

Those who had clearer plans were more likely to have reported positive outcomes at the Planning for Success Survey, with those whose main activity was professional or managerial level employment or further study more likely to have had clearer career plans at an early stage than those who were in non-professional employment or were unemployed.

Graduates who attended institutions in TRAC Group C, D, E or F were more likely than those who studied at TRAC Group A universities to have chosen to go to university, and to have selected the subject they studied, because it was a pre-requisite for their career and to have had clearer career plans at the point they applied for university.

Not all those in professional or managerial employment had had a career focussed approach; it appears that there is also a group who attended TRAC Group A universities who also moved into professional or managerial employment without having clear plans before university.

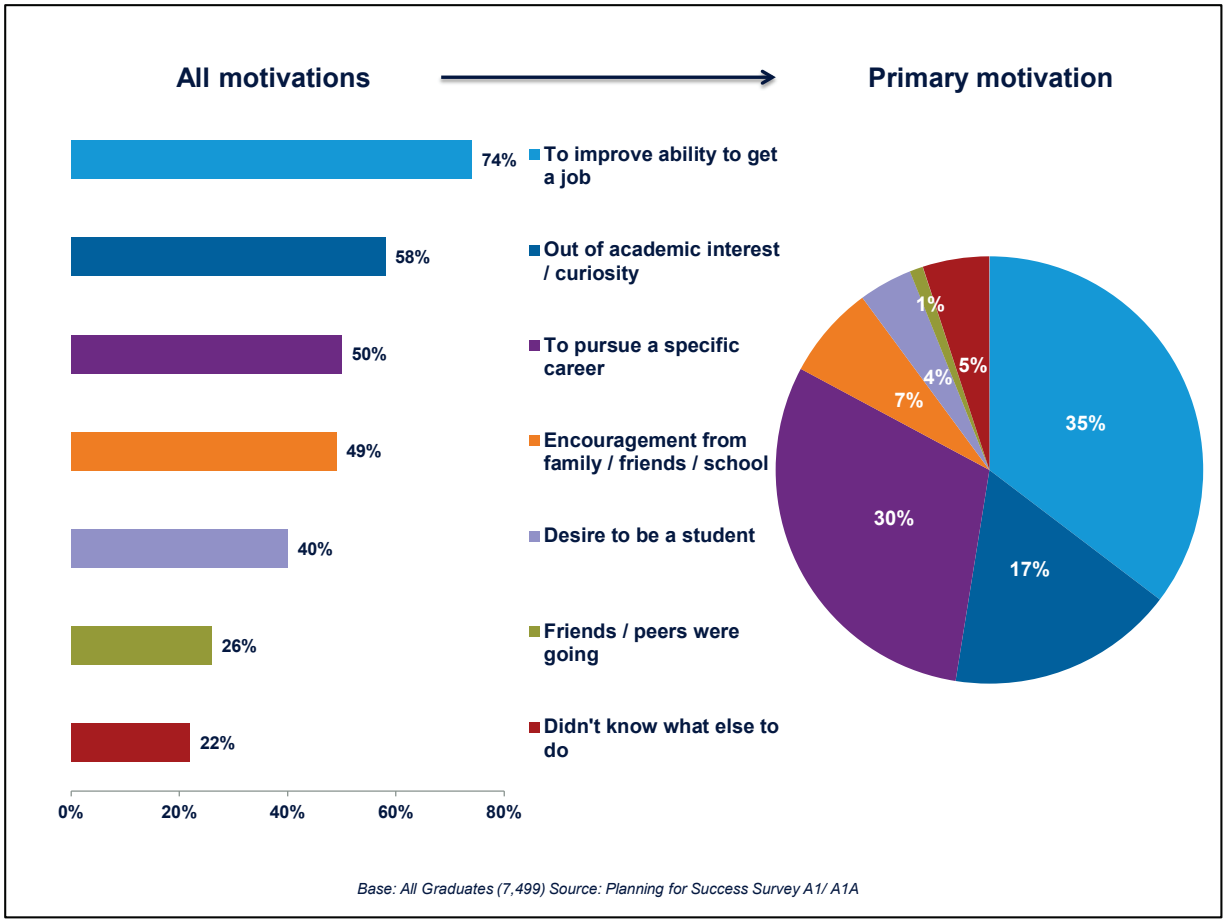
This chapter looks at the motivations for graduates applying for university, their reasons for studying particular subjects and the extent to they had developed career plans before going to university. It explores the extent to which graduate destinations can be affected at an early pre-university stage by graduates' motives and career plans.

Motivations for university study

Reasons for applying to university

Multiple factors play a part in the decision to apply for university; although some motivations are more common than others, there is no one overwhelming reason for entering higher education. Figure 3.1 presents an overview of the range of motivations that contributed to the decision for graduates to apply for university, as well as the proportion of graduates who were primarily motivated by each reason. These motivations are mainly centred on employability, academic interest and the influence of others, with around half or more graduates reporting each of these as a factor.

Figure 3.1: Motivations for going to university



However, the key driver for most graduates in the decision to go to university is the potential impact they think a university education could have on their employability and future career prospects. Two thirds (66 per cent) cited either the ability to get a job or the pursuit of a specific career as their main reason for going to university. These motivations were notably higher amongst graduates who had attended universities in TRAC Groups C or D and lower amongst graduates who had been to higher educational institutes in TRAC Group A (71 per cent compared to 58 per cent). Those who studied at TRAC Group F institutions were particularly likely to have been mainly motivated by wanting to pursue a specific career (the main reason for 39 per cent), this fits in as TRAC Group F institutions

are largely teaching institutions and those applying to these universities did so because they wanted to enter the teaching profession.

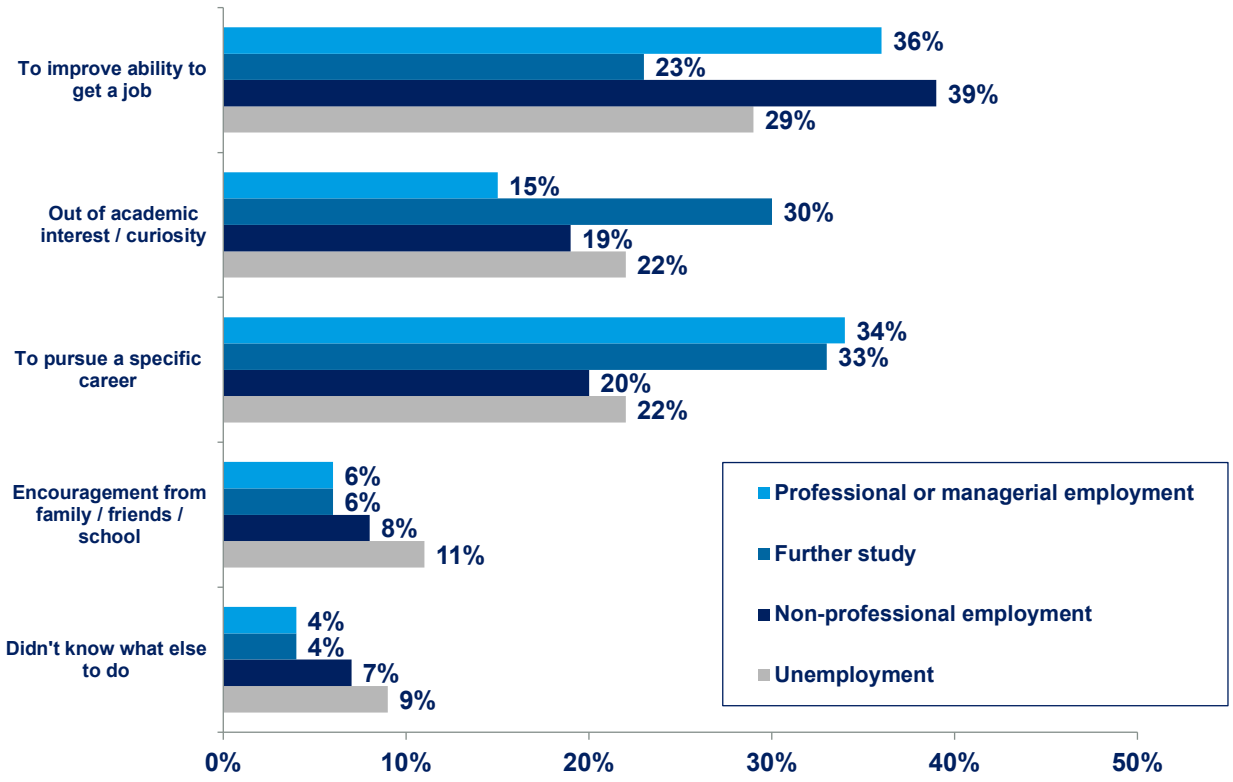
A marked difference is that those who studied Business, Law and Education were more likely to have selected one of the factors related to employability as their main reason for going to university (77 per cent did so), whilst those who studied Arts or Creative Arts and Design were much less likely to have done so (48 per cent and 55 per cent respectively). For those who studied Social Studies and Communications or Maths and Physical Sciences, general employability was more important than pursuing a particular career (ability to get a job was the main reason for going to university for 44% of those who studied Social Studies and Communications and 41 per cent who studied Maths and Physical Sciences) whilst the opposite was true for those who studied Medicine and Dentistry especially, and also those who studied Engineering and Architecture (to pursue a specific career was the main reason for going to university for 57 per cent of those who studied Medicine and Dentistry and 44 per cent who studied Engineering and Architecture).

Graduates who were from households lower in the socio-economic classification groups were more likely to have gone to university to pursue a specific career (35 per cent of those from the lower supervisory and technical, semi-routine and routine occupational groups compared to 29 per cent in roles classified higher in the scale). However, those who were from households in the highest socio-economic classification (higher managerial and professional occupations) were more likely to be in further study at both the DLHE and Planning for Success Survey points and were a little more likely to have gone to university primarily out of academic interest (20 per cent compared to 17 per cent of those from households with lower graded occupations).

Unsurprisingly, focus on employment at the point of application appears to be a positive influence in terms of employment outcomes. At the Planning for Success Survey stage those in professional or managerial employment were more likely than those whose main activity was unemployment to have cited one of the motivations relating to employability or career development as their key driver for going to university (70 per cent and 51 per cent respectively).

However, there are differences between the outcome groups in the extent to which obtaining a degree was to improve general employment prospects or to pursue a specific career, as shown in Figure 3.2. Wanting to improve general employability was particularly likely to have been the main reason for those whose main activity at the Planning for Success Survey stage was non-professional employment (39 per cent). This was twice the proportion who had wanted to follow a specific career (20 per cent), which represented the greatest disparity seen among all outcome groups. On the surface, it could appear that this group saw success in that they wished to improve employability and were in employment, even if this wasn’t necessarily professional or managerial employment.

Figure 3.2: Main motivation for going to university by main activity at the Planning for Success Survey



Base: Main activity at Planning for Success Survey – Professional or managerial employment (4,795), further study (786), non-professional employment (1,471), unemployment (168). Source A1A

Needing a degree to pursue a specific career was more often the key driver for those whose main activity was further study or professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey point with at least a third citing this (33 per cent of those who were studying and 34 per cent of those in professional or managerial employment) compared to around a fifth of those who were unemployed (22 per cent) or in non-professional employment (20 per cent). Indeed, for those in further study at the Planning for Success Survey point, wanting to pursue a specific career was a more common primary motivation than the general desire to improve their ability to get a job. It may be that a sizeable number of those in further study were continuing to pursue qualifications required for a specific career rather than using their degree to move straight into generic professional or managerial employment.

This focus on needing a degree for a specific career and less interest in a general improvement in employability was also seen among those whose main activity at the Planning for Success Survey stage was part--time professional or managerial employment, although to a lesser extent (32 per cent compared to 29 per cent). This group

were perhaps more willing to take up part--time employment in their preferred area rather than a full-time job in another field.

The secondary driver in graduate's decisions to go to university was that of academic interest or curiosity. Although this was declared a contributing factor in their decision to go to university by 58 per cent of graduates, only 17 per cent of graduates pinpointed it as the main reason for doing so. It was particularly likely to have been a core motivator for those who studied Arts or Creative Arts and Design (31 per cent and 26 per cent respectively) compared to the average across all other subject areas (15 per cent). Graduates who attended a university in TRAC Group A and those who went on to achieve a first-class degree were more likely to have cited this as their main driver (26 per cent and 23 per cent respectively) compared to across those who attended TRAC Group B-F establishments (14 per cent) and those who were awarded lower degree classifications (16 per cent). Also, graduates who reported further study as their main activity at the DLHE or the Planning for Success Survey point (more likely those who attended TRAC group A universities and were awarded a first-class degree) were more likely to have gone to university primarily out of academic interest (24 per cent and 30 per cent respectively). This academic motivation was notably less likely to have been the reason for those who were in full-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage (14 per cent), but was more important amongst graduates who were in part-time professional or managerial employment (main reason for 24 per cent).

Almost half of all graduates (49 per cent) highlighted encouragement from their family members, friends or former school as a contributing factor in their decision to go to university. However, it was only the main reason for 7 per cent of graduates.

A little over a fifth (22 per cent) of the graduates surveyed were at least partly motivated to go to university because they did not know what else to do. This uncertainty about what to do after compulsory education formed the main reason for going to university for one in twenty (five per cent) graduates. It was more common amongst individuals who studied at universities in TRAC Group E and F (9 per cent) and less common amongst those who attended institutions in TRAC Group A (3 per cent).

It appears that being ***less*** motivated either to study for the sake of study or in order to enhance general employability impacts graduates' likelihood of academic success; those who graduated with a 2:2 or a 3rd class degree were more likely to have primarily gone to university because of encouragement from others or because they did not know what else to do (16 per cent compared to 11 per cent amongst those who obtained a higher class of degree). Similarly those who were unemployed at either the DLHE or the Planning for Success Survey point or those with an 'other' outcome at the DLHE were more likely to have cited one of these reasons; it appears that those who did not have particularly strong academic or career motivations before university were those less likely to report positive outcomes longer term.

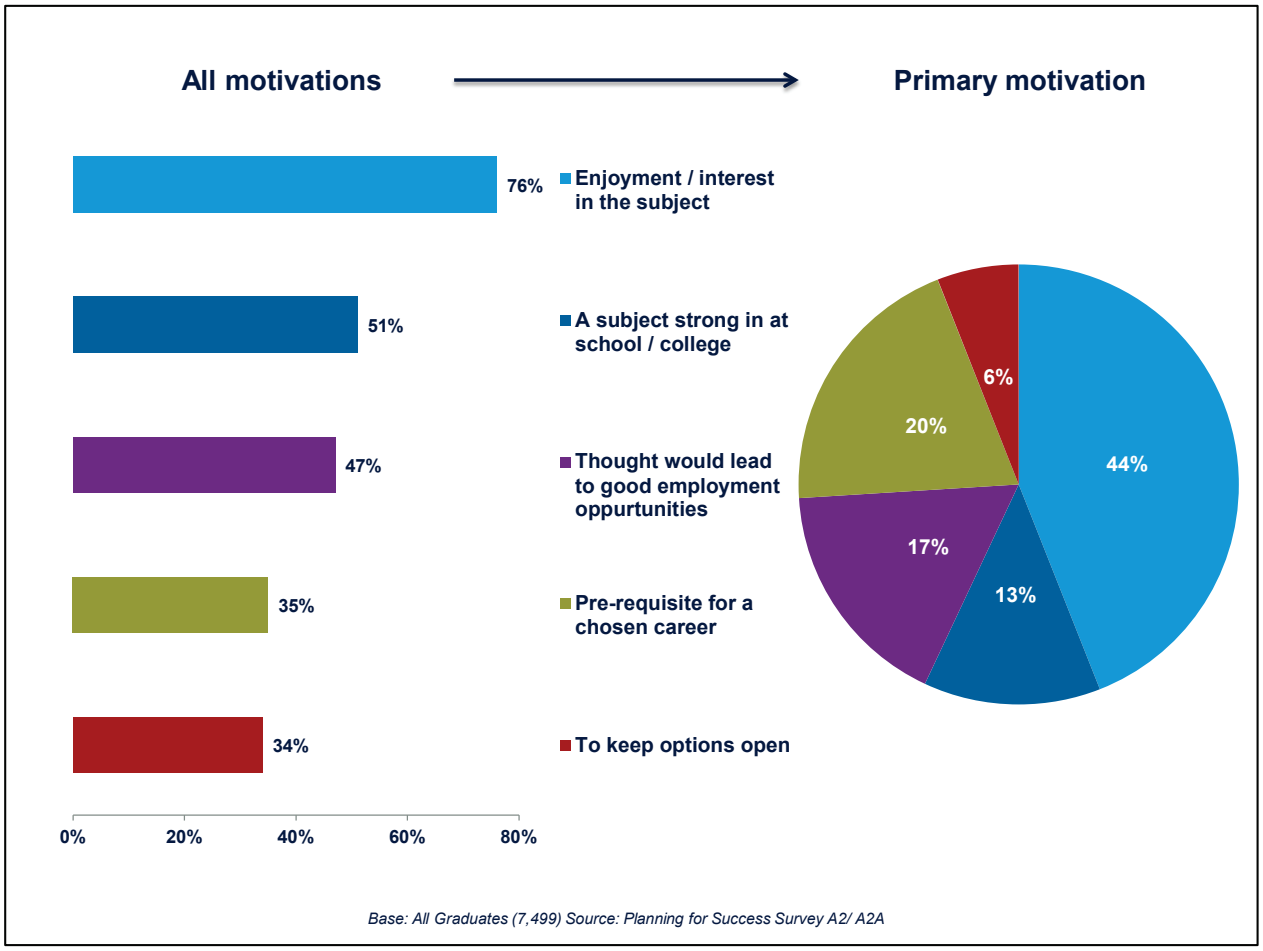
Reasons for studying specific subject area

Just as graduates were motivated by a number of reasons when they applied for university, their decision on which subject to study was also influenced by a number of factors as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

Personal enjoyment of or interest in a specific subject was the principal motivating factor behind choice of subject. This was a contributing factor for over three quarters (76 per cent) of graduates and was highlighted as the main reason by over two-fifths (44 per cent). Enjoyment or interest was the most common key driver in subject choice amongst graduates who studied at universities across all TRAC Groups, although it was particularly likely to have been behind the decision of those who attended TRAC Group A/B universities, with half (50 per cent) citing it as their main reason compared to just a third (33 per cent) of those who studied at TRAC Group C universities and two fifths (40 per cent) of those who attended TRAC Group D/E/F institutions.

Those who achieved a First or 2:1 were more likely to have primarily chosen a subject based on interest than those who obtained lower degree classifications (47 per cent compared to 40 per cent). Graduates of Arts and Creative Art and Design courses were particularly likely to have chosen these subjects based on interest and enjoyment (65 per cent and 60 per cent had done so respectively), whilst those who studied Business, Law and Education or Medicine and Dentistry were notably less likely to say they had primarily chosen it out of enjoyment or interest in the subject.

Figure 3.3: The motivations for choosing a specific subject



Base: All Graduates (7,499) Source: Planning for Success Survey A2/ A2A

The second most commonly cited contributing factor amongst graduates for choosing a subject to read at university was the fact that it was an area they were strong in at school or

college (51 per cent); however it was only the main reason for choosing the subject for just around one in eight graduates (13 per cent), pushing it into fourth place in terms of main reason for subject choice. Those university leavers who had studied Mathematics and Physical Science were more likely to have chosen a subject mainly on the grounds of it being one they had shown promise in before university (21 per cent).

The decision to study a subject because it was a prerequisite for a chosen career was the fourth most commonly identified contributing factor (for 35 per cent of graduates) but it evidently was key within this group as it was the second most commonly highlighted main reason for subject choice (for 20 per cent of graduates). As would be expected, those who studied Medicine and Dentistry were most likely to have done so mainly because it was imperative for their future career and those who studied a subject in the Arts or Mathematics and Physical Sciences were least likely to have done so (47 per cent compared to seven per cent and five per cent respectively). Graduates who attended TRAC Group E or F universities, and to some extent those who attended Group C or D establishments, were more likely than those who studied at Group A or B universities to have chosen their subject mainly as it was a pre-requisite for a particular career (29 per cent, 21 per cent compared to 14 per cent respectively). The belief that the subject studied at university would lead on to good employment opportunities was the third most common driver in their choice of subject for almost half (47 per cent) of graduates but was the main motivation for less than a fifth (17 per cent).

Graduates who studied Business, Law and Education or Engineering and Architecture were more likely to have chosen these subjects because they thought it would generally enhance their employment opportunities (31 per cent, 23 per cent respectively) whilst those who studied Arts or Creative Arts and Design were least likely to have done so (6 per cent, 7 per cent respectively) . It was more likely to have been the main concern for those who studied at TRAC Group C or D institutions (for 21 per cent compared to 15 per cent and 13 per cent amongst those who studied at TRAC Group A or B or E or F respectively).

Just over a third of both male and female graduates had chosen their courses primarily for one of these reasons related to employability or specific career development but male graduates were more likely than female to want to generally improve their employment prospects (21 per cent vs 14 per cent female) whilst needing to study the subject as pre-requisite for a particular career was more frequently the main reason for female graduates than for male (23 per cent compared to 16 per cent).

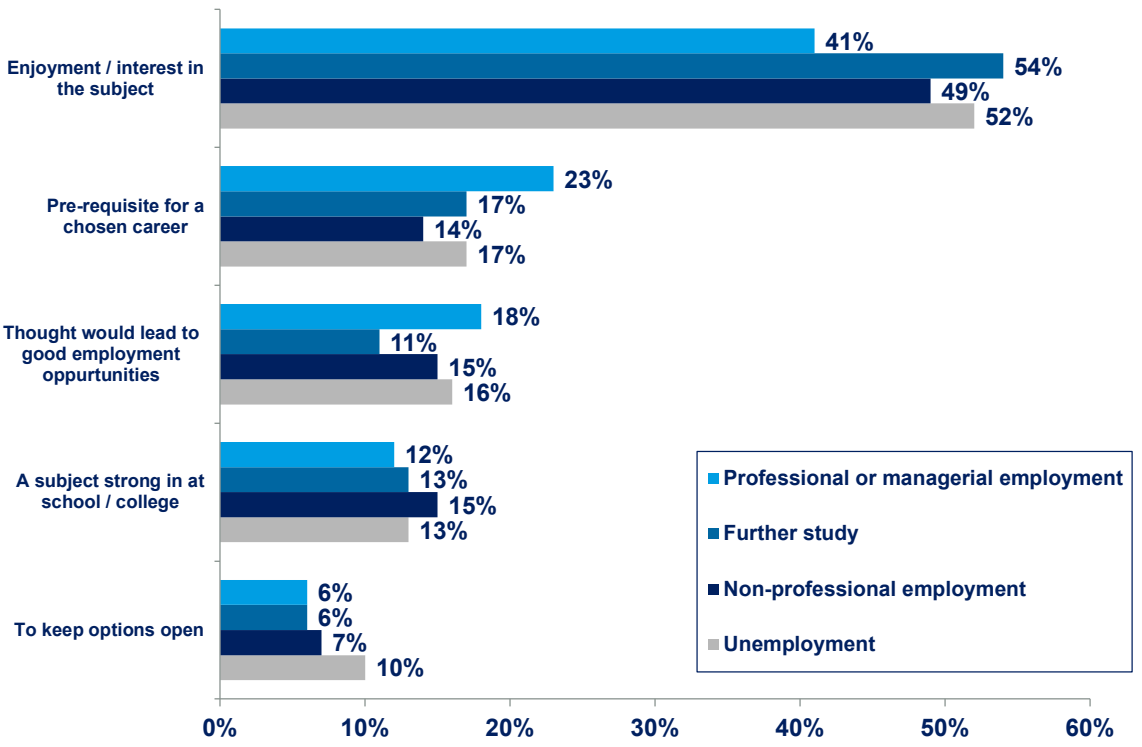
Although around a third of graduates (34 per cent) had partly reasoned that their subject choice would keep their options open, this was more often a secondary consideration behind those discussed above and only the main reason for six per cent.

Although interest in the subject was still the most common key reason for choosing their subject, those whose main activity at the point of the Planning for Success Survey was professional or managerial level employment were more likely to have chosen their subject because it was a pre-requisite for their chosen career or because they thought it would lead to employment opportunities and were less likely to have done so purely out of interest in the subject than those with other outcomes as shown in Figure 3.4. Around two fifths of those in professional or managerial employment had borne employability or a

future career in mind when they chose their subject, compared to only a third or less in all other outcome groups. However those in part-time professional or managerial roles at this point were a little more likely to have been focussed on subject interest than those in full-time (50 per cent compared to 40 per cent).

This had also been true at DLHE, with those in professional or managerial roles at that point more likely to have chosen their subject for reasons relating to employability (and less likely to have made the decision based on interest) than those in other outcome groups.

Figure 3.4: Main motivation for choosing subject by Planning for Success Survey outcome group



Base: Main activity at Planning for Success Survey – Professional or managerial employment (4,795), further study (786), non-professional employment (1,471), unemployment (168). Source A2A

Overall pursuit of a career or improving employability were key reasons either in deciding to go to university or in choosing a subject for over two thirds (68 per cent) of graduates; however these being the main motivations for choosing to going to university and subject choice was less common (32 per cent). One might expect this proportion to increase with time as the increase in tuition fees takes effect.

By combining graduates' main reasons for applying to university and choosing their specific subject it is possible to understand further their motivations for making the specific choices that they did. The orange cells in Table 3.1 show that for almost two-thirds of

graduates their main reason for going to university and studying a specific subject was determined by two main considerations:

- A (specific) degree was required for employment and;
- Enjoyment of or strength of ability in, a specific subject.

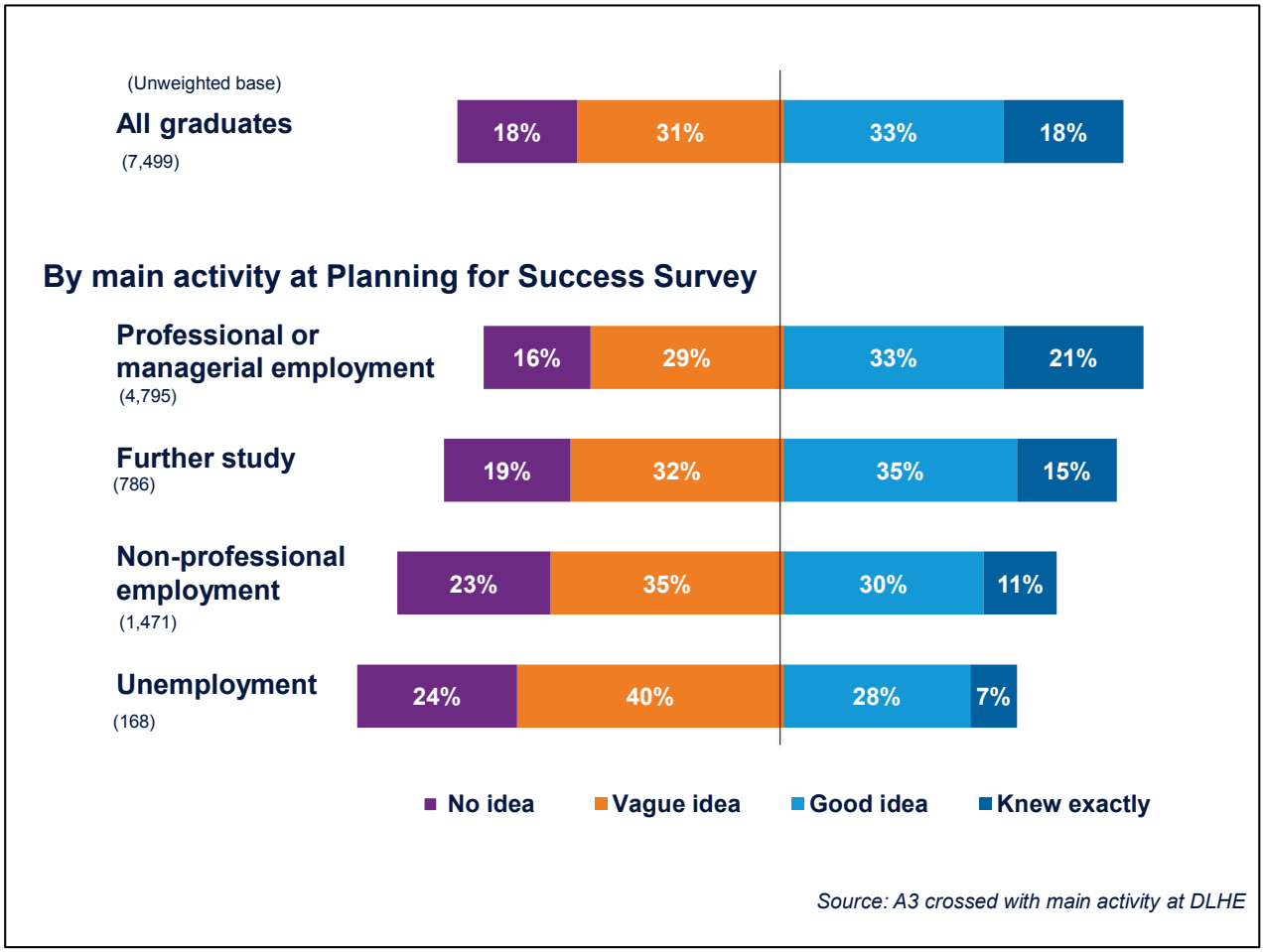
Reasons for applying to university / choosing a specific subject						
Base: All (7,499)	**Main reason for choosing a specific subject**					
Main reason for applying to university		Prerequisite for a chosen career	Thought it would lead to good employment ops.	Enjoyment or interest in the subject	To keep options open	Subject strong in at school
	Needed degree to pursue a specific career	15%	5%	8%	1%	2%
	Improve ability to get a job	3%	9%	15%	3%	5%
	Out of academic interest / curiosity	1%	1%	13%	1%	1%
	Friends or peers were going	0%	<0.5%	<1%	<0.5%	<0.5%
	Encouragement from family, school or friends	<0.5%	1%	4%	1%	2%
	Wanted to be a student	<0.5%	<1%	2%	<0.5%	1%
	Didn't know what else to do	0%	0%	<0.5%	2%	0%

Table 3.1 Main reason for going to university and choosing specific subject

Pre-university career plans

In the Planning for Success Survey, graduates were asked to think back to their career plans prior to starting university. Graduates were split evenly between those who either knew exactly or had a good idea about the types of jobs or careers they wanted to pursue (50 per cent) and those who had little or no idea (49 per cent) as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: The extent to which graduates knew what job or career they wanted to pursue at the point of applying to university (by main activity at Planning for Success Survey



Source: A3 crossed with main activity at DLHE

Qualitative research showed many graduates appreciated the importance of having a career plan pre-university, illustrating that this can help focus studies and other activities which may assist in moving into a preferred career whilst at university.

[Having a career plan is] very important because otherwise you can't tailor the additional work you do towards your eventual goals and it's difficult to be competitive in any job if you don't really know what you want to do.

Male, Medical Sciences

It is important because a lot of people do get stuck and comfortable and it's a lot harder when the years go past and you're not really doing what you wanted to do.

Female, Psychology

I think it's very important. Because if you have a good idea of where you're going then you can think about how you're going to get there, and if you just leave it to fate or ad-hoc career planning then you're going around in circles, and it takes you a long while; you've squandered the opportunity along the way.

Male, Politics

Some discussed how having a career plan (or not) affected their mindset

When I left university I had a few job ideas but I was left in a position where it took too long job hunting because I hadn't set clear enough goals about where I wanted to get to... I would have planned my career a bit sooner so that I would have had more time to work out exactly what to apply for and how to go about it. I might have spent more time going to the career advisors to see what they said about applying for jobs.

Male, Music Studio Technology

It's probably terribly important because then you learn, you can visualise the small steps of how you're going to get there, which is quite important when it's so competitive.

Female, American and Canadian Studies

Some graduates had a different viewpoint and did not necessarily see a lack of early career planning detrimental, indeed they considered keeping their options open to be beneficial.

I think it's the wrong thing to do, to go into university with a set career plan and say "This is what you're going to do, and this is what you're going to get out of it" because there are lots of options to try different things and you might change your mind. I think that's probably quite a healthy thing rather than be obsessed about one route and not consider something that's a really good job.

Male, Politics and International Relations

How can anyone be sure where they're going to end up? I just can't see setting myself a single path when there are thousands of paths in front of me. I don't want to be narrow minded.

Female, Marine Environmental Science

It's important but you don't need to map everything out early on. It's important to weigh up your options at uni but I don't think you need a defined plan, you just need the right help to consider different options and plans. I think people need different plans, there's not one plan for everybody.

Female, Geography

Graduates who attended a TRAC Group E or F institutions were more likely to have known precisely what career they wanted to pursue when they applied to university (23 per cent and 29 per cent respectively compared to 19 per cent and 14 per cent of those who attended TRAC Group C or D and TRAC Group A or B institutions respectively).

Those who had decided to study in the areas of Medicine and Dentistry or Business, Law and Education were more likely to have had definite career plans before university (39 per cent, 26 per cent respectively) whilst only around 10 per cent of those who studied Arts, Social Studies and Communications, or Mathematics and Physical Sciences did. There was little difference in the degree class obtained by those who did and didn't have career plans before university.

Although around half of both male and female graduates had either an exact or a good idea of the jobs or careers they wanted to pursue, female graduates were more likely to be definite and have an exact idea (21 per cent compared to 14 per cent of male graduates).

Looking further forwards at the effect of a career plan on employment outcomes it is clear that at the Planning for Success Survey stage those whose main activities were professional or managerial employment or education were more likely to have had a stronger career plan when applying to university than those who were in non-professional employment or unemployed. Half of those whose main activity at the Planning for Success

Survey point was professional or managerial employment or further study (54 per cent, 49 per cent respectively) reporting they had had an exact career plan or a good idea when they were applying to university compared to around two fifths of those whose main activity was non-professional employment or unemployment (41 per cent, 36 per cent respectively). Indeed those in professional or managerial employment by the Planning for Success Survey stage were almost twice as likely as those who were in non-professional employment and three times as likely as those who were unemployed at this point to have known exactly what job or career they wished to pursue when they were applying to university (21 per cent compared to 11 per cent, 7 per cent respectively).

This highlights the importance of early career planning for many although there is a group - in particular those from TRAC Group A and B universities - who entered professional or managerial employment but did not have an early career plan. Only half (49 per cent) of those who had studied at a TRAC Group A or B university and were in professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage had had a definite career plan when they applied to university compared to 60 per cent of those who went to a TRAC Group C or D or 67 per cent of those who went to a TRAC Group E or F institution and had gone on to professional or managerial employment.

This chapter has shown that on the whole, individuals apply to university to improve their employability, and that those with clear career plans at this point, generally go on to enjoy better employment outcomes in the longer term. The next chapter will detail the types of careers advice graduates receive whilst at university and during the six months after and how they develop their career plans.

Chapter 4 Sources of careers advice

This section of the report focuses on the different avenues used by graduates to gain careers advice and develop career plans, while at university and in the six months following. It explores more specifically the proportion who used their university careers service, both overall and by specific types of service used, and reasons for not using the service.

Chapter Summary

The majority of graduates had spoken to their family and friends for careers advice, while around half had used their careers service and a comparable proportion had sought advice from the academic staff at their institution. In the qualitative interviews, graduates tended to identify academic staff as having the greatest impact on their career planning, largely due to their specialist expertise and experience in the field of interest.

No differences were seen in terms of the proportions of those in different types of employment making use of the university careers service. However, graduates who experienced unemployment at either DLHE or Planning for Success Survey were more likely to have utilised the service than those in employment and to have done so after leaving university.

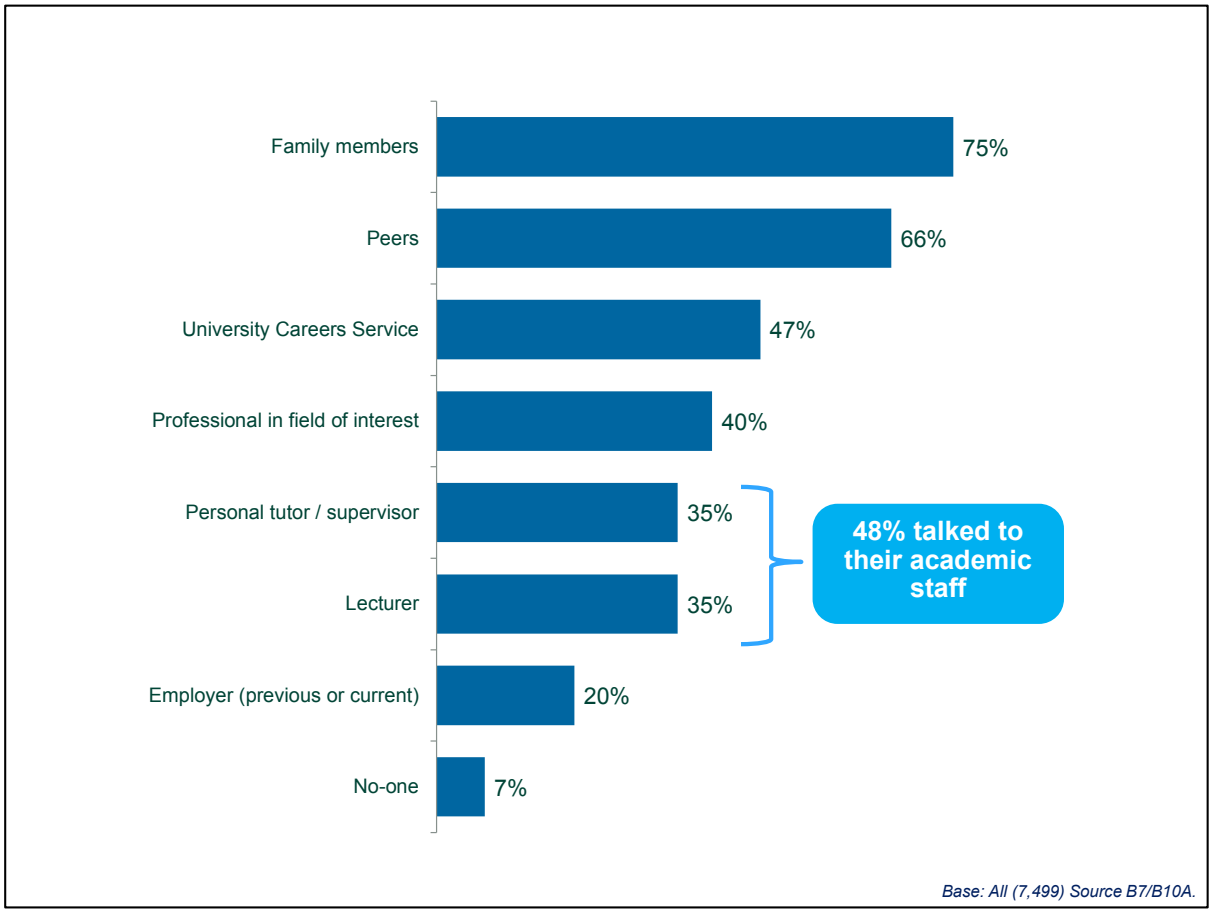
Accessing the website and communications to gain information on careers and opportunities was the most commonly cited use of the service (36 per cent of graduates did so), although careers fairs were also attended by a comparable proportion (32 per cent).

The most common reasons for not using the careers service were a lack of awareness of the services available, and the belief that there was no need as they knew exactly what they wanted to do at this time, both cited by around two in five graduates. Qualitative interviews indicated that in cases of the latter, there was a tendency for graduates to feel that their chosen path was too niche for the careers service to add novel insight and guidance. In line with this, a minority of graduates who used the careers service said that the advice received was too generic to warrant a strong positive impact on career planning.

Sources of careers advice

Graduates turned to a range of sources of advice on their career development, most commonly from family members and peers, with three-quarters (75 per cent) stating that they had spoken to the former and two-thirds (66 per cent) the latter, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Sources of careers advice used by the Planning for Success Survey cohort



The university careers service were also seen to play a role, with around half of the graduates utilising the service for advice, either while at university or in the six months following graduation[14] (47 per cent).

Level of use was higher among males (49 per cent vs. 45 per cent of females), and graduates who had a vague idea of what career they wanted to pursue at the point of leaving university (52 per cent vs. 46 per cent among those who had at least a good idea, and falling to 42 per cent among those who had no idea).

[14] Either centrally or through their academic departments

Likelihood to use the university careers services varied according to TRAC group and degree classification. Nearly three in five graduates from TRAC group A universities had used the service, falling steadily through the TRAC groups to 32 per cent from TRAC Group F. This may reflect that graduates from universities in TRAC groups B to F generally had a better idea of their career paths prior to entering university. Similarly, 56 per cent of graduates who achieved a First had used this service, reducing to 49 per cent of those with a 2:1, 37 per cent with a 2:2 and 34 per cent of with a Third.

No significant differences were seen in the level of use between those in different types of employment at the Planning for Success Survey point (47 per cent of those in full-time professional or managerial and non-professional employment and 42 per cent of those in part-time professional or managerial employment made use of the service). However, there was a tendency for graduates who were unemployed at this time to be more likely to use their university careers service than those in employment (55 per cent vs. 47 per cent).

Comparable to the proportion using the university careers service, around half the graduates spoke to a member of academic staff at their institution (48 per cent; either their personal tutor/supervisor or lecturer). In terms of the type of academic staff spoken to, graduates were equally likely to have spoken to their tutor/supervisor as they were to their lecturer (both 35 per cent).

Likelihood of speaking to academic staff was seen to differ by TRAC group and degree classification; those from TRAC groups D to F were more likely to have spoken to the staff than those from TRAC groups A to C (53 per cent average vs. 44 per cent average), as were those who achieved a First (60 per cent vs. 48 per cent across other classes).

Graduates in further study or part-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey point were also more likely than others to have spoken to their academic staff (64 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively, vs. 48 per cent average).

Despite similar proportions speaking to each, in qualitative interviews many graduates identified the advantages of talking to academic staff over the careers service, and the comparatively greater impact these individuals had on their career planning. One common theme was the value of the specialised knowledge held by this staff.

I always spoke to my lecturers because they've have more knowledge in the areas I'm interested in, and I'd say they've been quite influential. That's because they've got a personal connection with me; I knew these people for three years and that's why I went to them.

Female, Physical Sciences

I got all of that advice directly from lecturers because I wanted to work in sound design (sound for films) and it's quite a niche area. The career service probably really wouldn't have been geared up to answer many of my questions about that type of industry I came to university wanting to be a music sound engineer but left wanting to do sound for film, TV

or games, or to go into acoustics. Through my lecturer's advice I changed my career path without him forcing me to, he just gave me ideas.

Male, Technologies

The biggest help I had was my lecturers because they were specialists in the field that I've gone into which is tourism & hospitality. They really helped me to identify career paths within the industry, and they obviously had contacts.

Female, Business and Administrative Studies

CASE STUDY

A graduate who used their university careers service and lecturers to assist with career planning. This graduate is currently employed in a part-time role and dissatisfied with their career progress made to date.

Anne attended a TRAC Group D university and completed a degree in Physical Sciences.

Anne used the careers service of her university every six weeks during the last year of her degree in order to assist her search for jobs, practise her interview technique and improve her CV. Despite using the careers service regularly, the advice and guidance provided did not have a significant influence on Anne's career planning. Instead, Anne found the advice and guidance offered to her by lecturers to be much more constructive in the development of her career plan due to them having greater knowledge of the sector she wished to work in.

The careers centre covers so many topics that there isn't any specific information on bio-science or meteorology. So I needed someone who was very specific on these areas.

Although Anne does not feel as though the careers service had an influence on her career plan compared to that of lecturers, she is very satisfied with the service they provided.

I'd say very satisfied. They were there when I needed them. They helped me and they didn't push me into anything I didn't want to do.

Upon completing her undergraduate degree Anne went on to study for an MA in meteorology. She believed this would enhance her employability, but since graduating she has been unable to obtain full-time employment. After a prolonged period of unemployment Anne is now working part-time as a debt collector and is dissatisfied with her career progress.

Two in five graduates (40 per cent) sought advice from professionals in their field of interest, while half this amount (20 per cent) spoke to a previous or current employer.

As with academic staff, the notion of specialist knowledge and experience was thought of as particularly beneficial in terms of seeking advice from professionals in the field.

Independently I carried out research; I found people who worked in the industry and got in touch with a lot of them and got advice that way. They had an impact, more so than the services offered by the university because it's specialised, so they were people actually working in the industry who knew what path I should take

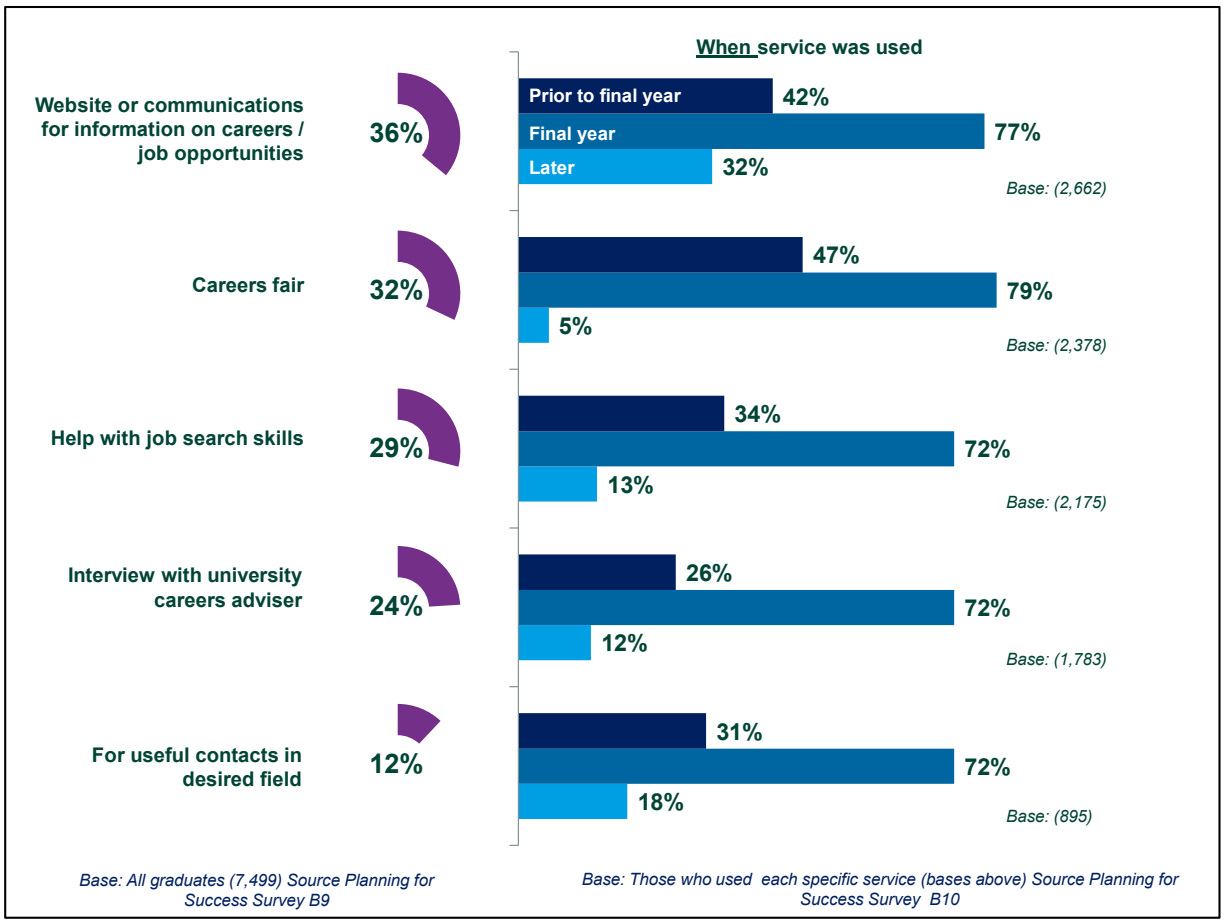
Male, Physical Sciences

Only five per cent stated that they did not seek advice from anyone, with this proportion higher among graduates who did not have a career plan on leaving university (10 per cent).

Specific uses of the university careers service

As reported above, around half of all graduates had used their university careers service in some capacity while at university or in the 6 months after, whether centrally or through their academic school or department. As shown in Figure 4.2, in terms of specific services used these were mostly associated with exploring career and job opportunities with just over a third of graduates accessing the careers service website or communications to gain information on careers and opportunities (36 per cent), a slightly lower proportion attending a careers fair (32 per cent) and a further 12 per cent using the service to source useful contacts in the field they wanted to work in. It was a little rarer for graduates to use the university careers service to target skills development through help with job search skills (such as CV writing, interview technique or practice with standard assessments) or to have an interview with a careers adviser.

Figure 4.2: Specific services used, and when use occurred



Sub-groups differences for use of each specific service are summarised in Table 4.1, accompanied by illustrative quotes on use from the qualitative phase.

Table 4.1 Summary of specific careers services accessed

Service type	Sub-group differences	Quotes from qualitative interviews
University careers service website / communications for information on careers or specific job opportunities	Those from TRAC group A were the most likely to have used this service, and likelihood of use decreased steadily through the groups from 45% (TRAC group A) down to 22% (TRAC group F). The following sub-groups were more likely to have used this service: • Males (38% vs. 33% females) • Graduates who achieved a First (45% vs. 36% average) • Those unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage (44% vs. 36% average)	
Attend university careers service careers fair	Greater proportions attended a careers fair among: • TRAC groups A-C (41% average vs. 22% average in TRAC groups D-F) • Those with a *vague* idea plan on entering university (36% vs. 29% with *at least* a good idea and 31% with no idea) • Males (35% vs. 29%) Graduates working in part-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage were less likely than average to attend a careers fair (24% vs. 32%). A number of qualitative accounts highlighted the importance of employers' presence at careers fairs, as individuals seemed to use these events to see what opportunities were available.	*The biggest one for me was, I went to careers fair to see what language jobs there were for linguists, and there weren't any! That was very good for me in terms of going to talk to people looking for graduates at the careers fair. I decided I had to go down a different route as [what I wanted to do] just wasn't available.* **Male, Languages**
Help from university careers service with job search skills (CV writing, interview	There was a greater tendency for help with job search skills to be acquired by: • Those who had *at least* a good idea of what they wanted to do on entering university (63% vs. 58% with no idea).	*I suppose just helping me with my CV in the sense of getting it up to standard. So they were my first port of call for getting*

Service type	Sub-group differences	Quotes from qualitative interviews
technique, practice with assessments)	• Graduates from TRAC group C (40% vs. 29% average) • Males (31% vs. 28% females) • Graduates with a higher degree class (37% with a First vs. 30% with a 2:1, 22% with a 2:2, 21% with a Third) Graduates working in part-time professional or managerial employment at the point of the Planning for Success Survey were less likely than average to get help with job search skills (23% vs. 29%).	*my CV looking good because I hadn't touched it since school.* **Male, Technologies**
Have an interview with a university careers adviser	Likelihood of having an interview with a careers advisor was higher among: • TRAC groups A-C (28% average vs. 19% average in TRAC groups D-F) • Graduates with a higher degree class (29% with a First, vs. 25% with a 2:1, 18% with a 2:2 and 17% with a Third) • Those *without* a good career plan on entering university (27% vs. 21 with *at least* a good career plan) • Those unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage (32% vs. 23% employed and 25% in further study) • Arts graduates (30% vs. 24% average) Qualitative feedback indicated graduates used this service (or viewed this service) for developing career plans and exploring different career options to determine what they were suited to.	*I met with one of the advisors just to talk about different career paths. I wanted to see what I could consider and to have that experience, but I didn't know which area I was looking at. The adviser said to look at marketing as that would suit me. Since then I have done a lot of marketing, so I think that influenced it.* **Female, Social Studies** *I think I probably could have gone to see a career's adviser and had a meeting with them. That might have helped me a little bit more to narrow my options and what I wanted to do. This would have made me a bit more focused when I left university, because I left and I didn't have a clue, which meant I just had to get a job.* **Female, Historical and Philosophical studies**
Use university careers service for useful contacts in the	Gaining useful contacts via the careers service was more common among TRAC	

Service type	Sub-group differences	Quotes from qualitative interviews
field they wanted to work in	group D (15% vs. 12% average) and males (14% vs. 11% females). It was less common among those with no career plan on entering university (7% vs. 13% of those with *at least* a vague idea)	

CASE STUDY

A graduate who used a variety of services offered by their university careers services. This individual is employed in a full-time professional or managerial role and is satisfied with their career progress.

Alice graduated from a TRAC Group A university with a BA in French and History.

Alice engaged with the careers service for the first time in her fourth and final year at university in an attempt to improve her chances of employment. Alice used a wide range of the services her university careers service had to offer, including careers fairs, the careers service website, mock assessment days, practice interviews and assistance with putting together a CV.

Alice believes that the careers service had a significant impact on her employability as it provided her with the skills necessary to compete for jobs.

> *I was very aware it was a very tough economic market and it was more that I was trying to do as much as I could to get a job. The careers service was good but it was more me thinking "I need these skills to get a job" and they were available there.*

Despite recognising that the careers service had an impact on her employability, Alice feels that the advice and guidance offered by friends and family and her independent research online was more influential in developing a career plan.

> *The internet was the biggest source of help. That really showed me what was out there and allowed me to search for things, and then probably friends and family in terms of talking about other people's experiences...I think other sources, particularly the internet, were more important than the careers service.*

After graduating Alice went straight into a full-time professional or managerial role, she is still working in the same role and is very satisfied with her career to date.

Although all services saw their greatest use in graduates' final year with around three quarters of users of each type doing so in their final year, some were relatively more likely to have been utilised earlier. So while half of those graduates who attended a careers fair did so before their final year (47 per cent), only a quarter (26 per cent) who had an interview with a careers adviser did so in the same timeframe. Presumably due to the continued ease of access following graduation, using the website and communication to research job opportunities was much more likely following graduation than any other service.

Graduates from TRAC group A to C universities were more likely to access the majority of services prior to the final year of university, while those who were unemployed at DLHE were more likely than those employed or in further study to have accessed each of the services in the six months following graduation, presumably because their situation created a need to explore as many routes to employment as possible during this time. This line of thought may also explain the higher level of use of the careers service among the unemployed in general, outlined earlier in the chapter, with these individuals perhaps turning to the service as a last port of call.

Reasons for not using the university careers service

Graduates who reported not to have used their careers service while at university or in the six months following were asked why this was the case.

One of the more common reasons was that graduates lacked awareness of what the careers service offered. Around two in five graduates cited this as a reason (38 per cent), with this proportion rising among those unemployed at the point of the Planning for Success Survey (48 per cent), females (40 per cent), and those from TRAC groups D and E (41 per cent and 45 per cent).

This reasoning was elaborated on in the qualitative interviews, wherein graduates were also probed for the extent to which they felt it is up to the careers service to proactively involve themselves in a student's / graduate's career planning and to the individual to seek out careers services. Responses from graduates who did not make use of the university careers service highlighted the importance of clearly advertising the different services available to them and how they can contribute to career planning and progression.

I think if we had a session that was linked to our timetable, for example one session in the whole of the year that introduced us to it and told us a bit more about it, then I probably would have used them. I don't really know what they do. The Careers Service need to actually tell us and how us that they're there, and what they do. I don't think people knew what there were there for or what they're meant to do.

Female, Education

Sometimes you don't know the full capabilities of their service. Maybe more could be done to promote those sorts of aspects to it, and make it a more attractive place to go.

Male, Subject unspecified

This said, many stated that their careers service was well promoted, and that where this is the case the onus lies with the individual to be proactive and take advantage of what they offer.

The careers service is a brilliant service to have and promoting themselves and making themselves available to people is what they're good at. If a student says they don't want to make the effort to learn about careers after university that's their decision. If you force it upon them they won't pay any interest to it.

Female, Mass Communication and Documentation

As long as the students know it's available it shouldn't be necessarily forced upon them. As long as the careers services were known about and the services they provided were acknowledged, I think it's more up to the students.

Male, Medicine

A similar proportion of graduates to those citing a lack of awareness (37 per cent) stated they that they did not feel a need to use their careers service as they knew exactly what they wanted to do. Somewhat expectedly, this proportion was substantially higher among those who had at least a good idea of what career they wanted to pursue on entering university (55 per cent).

Likelihood of providing this reason was also seen to differ by outcome. For example, those who were satisfied with their career progress at the Planning for Success Survey point were more likely to state that they did not use the careers service as they knew exactly what they wanted to do (41 per cent vs. 15 per cent dissatisfied with career progress), as were those in full-time professional or managerial roles and further study at this time (42 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, vs. 24 per cent in non-professional roles and 26 per cent unemployed).

Echoing the previous arguments for the comparative advantage of speaking to academic staff over the careers service, qualitative interviews revealed that in the cases outlined above it was often felt that the careers service lacked specialised knowledge for the desired career, and would therefore be unlikely to provide novel insight and guidance.

I knew from early on what I wanted to do. It's quite specialised and there wasn't much they could tell me about really because it's not a usual career path to follow, so all the procedures and steps they had in place weren't that relevant to what I wanted to do.

Male, Physical Sciences

The notion of a lack of specialist advice was also echoed in qualitative discussions with graduates who did make use of the service, where a number reported that the advice offered was too generic to have a substantial impact on their career planning. In some cases it was felt this was due to a fear of 'pigeon-holing' students who are unclear of what they want to do.

The careers service people were just really generic, pointing you in the direction of grad schemes.

Female, Languages

From going there without having a clue, from that point they don't want to give you specific ideas to pigeonhole you at that early stage. It's a little bit open-ended; you're left to go away and think about it. They give you some pointers towards thinking about what things you enjoy in life, but it's very general and there aren't any specifics.

Female, Mathematical Sciences

Less commonly mentioned, although still cited by one in five graduates (18 per cent), was the opposing concept to that just discussed; the notion that graduates did not use the careers service as they had no idea what they wanted to do at this time. Likelihood of providing this response was greater among those who were dissatisfied with career progression at the Planning for Success Survey stage (27 per cent vs. 17 per cent satisfied), and those in non-professional roles or unemployment (22 per cent and 28 per

cent, respectively, vs. 16 per cent in professional or managerial employment and 20 per cent in further study).

The logic behind this reasoning (i.e. the belief that you need at least a vague career plan for the career service to base advice and guidance on) is somewhat supported with some qualitative accounts from graduates who did make use of the careers service.

> *I didn't have an awful lot of direction at the time. I think if I'd had gone to them with a specific role in mind they would have been able to research it and find out for me. But because I was starting with not a lot they probably found it difficult to help me out.*
>
> **Female, Physical Sciences**

A small minority (five per cent) said that they had heard bad things about the service and did not use them for this reason, and some stated that they used other avenues for career advice and information, such as recruitment websites and agencies / the internet in general.

In this chapter it was reported that most commonly, graduates sought careers advice through relatively informal channels. It also showed that although advice from academic staff was less commonly received, it was perceived to be most impactful on career decision. In the next chapter graduates' engagement in, and perceived value of different forms of work experience is explored.

Chapter 5 Work experience

Chapter Summary

Work experience is a common feature of university life with almost three quarters of graduates undertaking it in some form whilst at university or in the six months afterwards. For three in ten this included a mandatory work placement as part of their degree, with just over half organising paid and / or unpaid work to gain career experience, around a quarter undertaking an internship and a quarter participating in non-compulsory placements as part of their course.

All forms of work experience appear to be beneficial, with those who had participated in work experience more likely to be working in a professional or managerial level job by the Planning for Success Survey and less likely to be in non-professional employment or unemployed than those who did not do work experience. Work experience was considered important in securing employment for over half of graduates that undertook it and indeed directly led to job offers for over a quarter.

Graduates who had undertaken non-compulsory work experience tended to be those who had been proactive about career development in other ways too, with work experience one part of a package.

Graduate internships were relatively rare and appear to have been taken up by a limited group but were the most successful in terms of being offered desirable employment at the end of the experience and were especially likely to lead to professional or managerial roles.

Unpaid work experience, whilst widely undertaken, was the least useful in terms of direct offers of employment and was no more likely to lead to a full-time professional or managerial level role than to unemployment or a non-professional role.

Almost three quarters of graduates had engaged in paid work unrelated to their career aspirations whilst at university, or in the six months afterwards. Whilst this appears to help in gaining employment in the longer term it does not necessarily help in gaining professional or managerial level employment.

This section of the report explores those who undertook work experience whilst at university (or in the six months following). For the purposes of this report the term work experience includes any of the following; an industrial or sandwich year placement, shorter structured work placements as part of a course, shorter structured non-compulsory work placements secured with or without the help of the university, vacation internships, graduate internships and (un)paid work to gain useful career related experience. The chapter reports on the impact of different forms of work experience on graduate outcomes and looks at why some graduates valued work experience as a route to a chosen career whilst others did not pursue it.

Types of work experience undertaken

Graduates were asked if they had undertaken a number of specific forms of work experience, either while they were at university or in the six months immediately afterwards. The types of work experience explored can be grouped into:

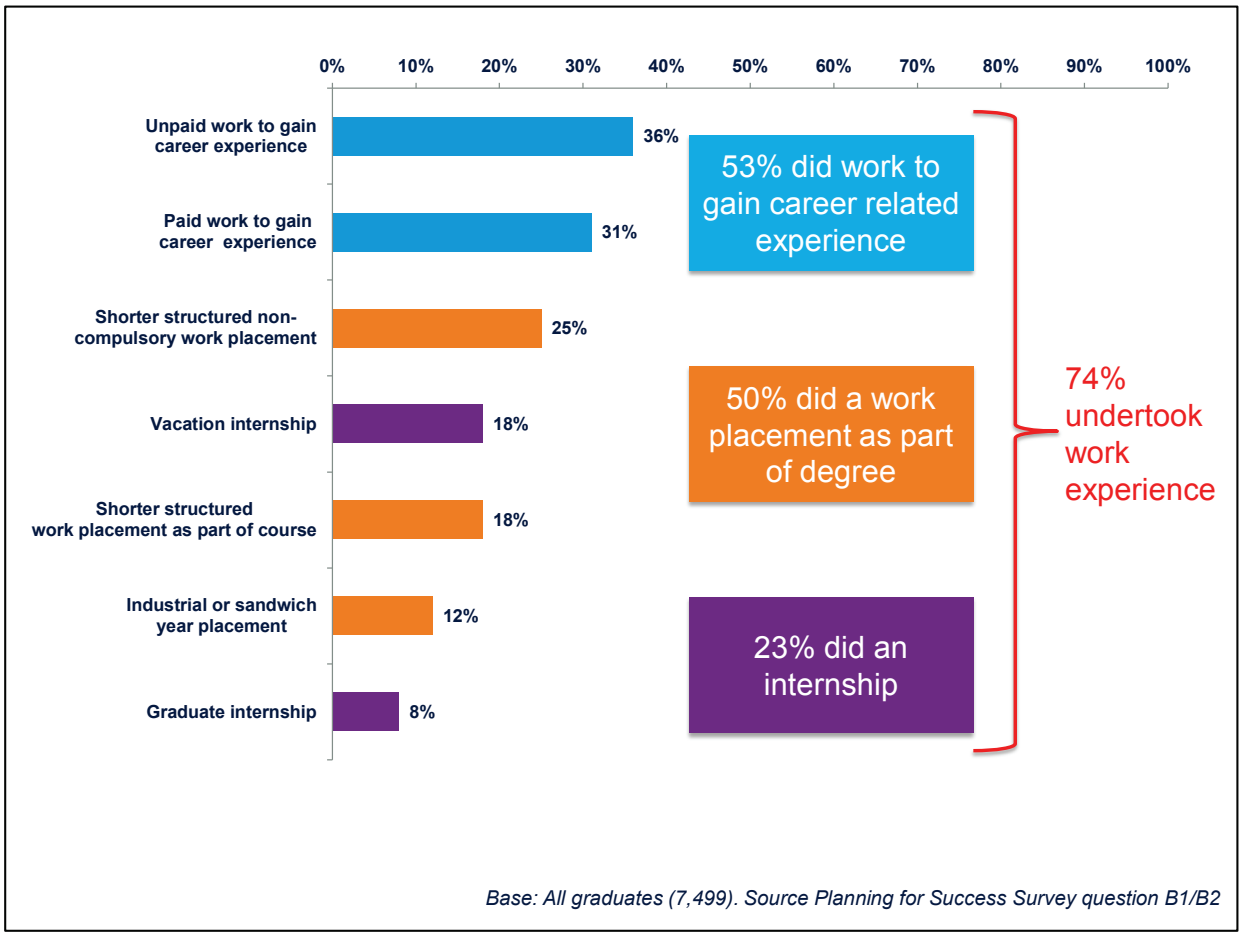
1. Work placements as part of their degree (industrial / sandwich year placements, shorter structured placements and non-compulsory shorter structured placements)

2. Internships (vacation and graduate)

3. Work to gain useful career experience (paid and unpaid)

Overall, half of graduates undertook some form of formal placement as part of their degree and just over half had been employed in either paid or unpaid work to gain useful career related experience. Internships were less common, undertaken by just under a quarter, as shown in Figure 6.1.

Figure 5.1: Levels of graduate participation in different forms of work experience



Those who had a career plan before university were more likely to have been proactive in terms of work experience too, undertaking more types than those who were less active.

Paid and unpaid work to gain career related experience

The most common forms of work experience that graduates undertook were paid and unpaid work that was not part of an internship but which was intended to gain the graduate useful career-related experience. Overall just over half of all graduates undertook either paid or unpaid career related work experience of this kind, with unpaid work slightly more common than paid (36 per cent and 31 per cent of graduates respectively)[15].

The survey explored whether students undertook this work experience during or after their degree course. Many students found time to combine paid work related to their career aspirations with study with just over three fifths (62 per cent) of the 31 per cent who undertook this type of work experience doing so whilst at university, with some continuing into the six months after university (21 per cent working both whilst at university and afterwards), and others (37 per cent) only starting after university. Unpaid work was even more likely to have been undertaken at the same time as studying, with 73 per cent of those who had done unpaid work related to their career doing so whilst at university.

Graduates of Creative Arts courses were more likely than average to have done both paid but especially unpaid work to gain career related experience, with a third (34 per cent) doing the former and almost half (48 per cent) the latter. Those who studied in the areas of Biological and Veterinary Sciences (45 per cent), Arts (42 per cent), Social Studies and/ Communications (40 per cent) were also notably more likely to have undertaken unpaid work.

Unpaid work was also more likely to have been undertaken by:

- Women (41 per cent v 29 per cent of men);
- Those who attended TRAC Group F universities (44 per cent)

Graduates who had an exact career plan, or a good idea of one, before university were notably more likely to do unpaid work to gain career related experience (40 per cent compared to 33 per cent of those with a vague idea and 30 per cent of those with no idea). This suggests a degree of focus and determination among some groups of graduates that we will return to in later sections of the report.

Structured work placements as part of degree

Half of all graduates undertook a formal placement as part of their degree. Perhaps surprisingly, non-compulsory placements (which may or may not have been arranged with help from the university) were more common than short structured placements which were a compulsory part of the course or than industrial / sandwich years (25 per cent compared to 18 per cent and 12 per cent respectively). All of these three types of work placement

[15] It should be noted that this section is only concerned with work which was undertaken specifically to gain useful career experience, not general work which was to earn money whilst studying which is covered separately below in section 5.6. Internships are also reported on separately below in section 5.2.3.

were more likely to have been taken up by those who had a more developed career plan before university than those who did not[16].

There are identifiable differences between the types of graduates who did each form of work placement.

Graduates who had undertaken **non-compulsory work placements** as part of their degree (either with or without assistance from their university) were more likely to be:

- Those from higher socio-economic backgrounds: 28 per cent of those from households in the managerial or professional occupational groups versus 23 per cent of those from households in lower occupational groups;
- Those studying Engineering and Architecture (37 per cent), Social Studies and Communications (31 per cent) or Creative Arts and Design (29 per cent);
- Those who studied at a TRAC Group A institution (34 per cent compared to 24 per cent of those at Group E institutions and even smaller proportions at others);
- Those who were 'heavy' users of their university careers service (33 per cent compared to 28 per cent of medium users, 26 per cent of lighter users and just 22 per cent of non-users), and those who had an exact career plan or a good idea before university (29 per cent compared to 24 per cent of those with a vague idea and 19 per cent of those with no idea).

The qualitative research also explored why graduates undertook work experience

Going to university was very much "make the most of it" and not just rest on your laurels. You're not there to have fun may be as much as some people treat the experience. I wanted to make sure I was competing…that sounds horrible, but I wanted to set myself apart from other people who were going to be graduating at the same time as me. I wanted to get as much work experience as possible.

Male graduate, Social Studies

Mostly it was … brightening up my CV a little bit, as I hadn't done anything for a couple of years. I was about to go into my final year so it made sense to get some more skills.

Female graduate, Arts

[16] 29 per cent, 26 per cent and 13 per cent of those with an exact career plan / a good idea before university compared to 22 per cent,10 per cent and 11 per cent of those with only a vague idea / no idea

By contrast, graduates who had undertaken **compulsory shorter structured work placements** as part of their course were more likely to be:

- Those who were studying in the areas of Medicine and Dentistry (52 per cent) or Business, Law and Education (21 per cent), and (linking with Education courses) those who studied at a TRAC Group F institution (57 per cent);

- Those who did not use their university careers service (23 per cent did a compulsory structured placement compared to 13 per cent of 'heavy' users, 14 per cent of 'medium' users and 10 per cent of 'light' users).

Graduates interviewed for the qualitative research provided insight into this more passive form of work experience,

> *It's something you need to do but it depends what activities you do on that work experience because if you're just making teas and coffees and you need to put something on your CV then where's the benefit in that?*
>
> **Male graduate, Law**

Those who undertook **sandwich / industrial placements** tended to be quite specific groups, with uptake far higher amongst those who studied in the areas of Engineering and Architecture or Business, Law and Education (22 per cent in each compared to 9 per cent average across all other subject areas) and those who studied at TRAC Group C institutions (34 per cent compared to 11 per cent average across those in other TRAC Groups). Those who used the careers service more heavily were more likely to have participated in this type of work experience than those who used it less or not at all.

Internships

Around a quarter of graduates (23 per cent) had undertaken an internship, defined as 'a fixed and limited period of time spent working within an organisation as part of a structured programme'. Vacation internships (completed during university holidays, typically over the summer), undertaken by 18 per cent, were more common than internships completed after graduation (8 per cent).

Internships (both vacation and graduate) were taken up by a specific, select, group of graduates:

- Those from TRAC Group A universities (39 per cent compared to 21 per cent average across TRAC Groups B/C and 15 per cent, 16 per cent and 11 per cent from D to F universities);

    - This is especially the case for vacation internships (33 per cent Group A compared to 15 per cent average from Groups B/C, 10 per cent average

from Groups D to F), with graduate internships almost equally common amongst TRAC Group A and C graduates (11 per cent Group A, 10 per cent Group C compared to 8 per cent Group B and 6 per cent average across Groups D to F)

- Those who studied in the Engineering and Architecture subject area (42 per cent compared to 22 per cent average across other subject areas, Arts being next highest at 28 per cent);
    - This is largely driven by vacation internships, with graduate internships most common amongst Arts graduates (12 per cent of Arts graduates undertook a graduate internship, followed by 10 per cent of Social Studies and Communications, Creative Arts and Design and Medicine and Dentistry graduates)
- Those who achieved a First (30 per cent versus 15 per cent with a 2:2 and 13 per cent with a Third);
- Those who had also done a work placement as part of their degree course (33 per cent versus 14 per cent of those who had not done a placement).

There is also a link between internships and being from a household in a higher socio-economic grade, with the likelihood that a graduate had undertaken an internship increasing as one moves across the occupational grades (30 per cent of those who were from households in the higher managerial and professional occupational group had completed an internship compared to half that proportion from semi-routine and routine occupational groups). This is in line with concerns that have been frequently voiced that internships are the preserve of better-connected graduates, and that they therefore tend to constrict social mobility[17].

Internships also appear to have been more commonly part of the career path for those who had a career plan before they started university (24 per cent compared to 20 per cent who did not), and those who were heavier users of their university careers service (35 per cent compared to 26 per cent of lighter users, and 18 per cent of non-users).

Finding work experience opportunities

It is evident from the survey findings that some of those who undertook or applied for work experience were more proactive than others.

The more independent approaches of searching online (60 per cent of graduates used this method) and making speculative enquiries direct to employers (48 per cent) were the most common tactics. Overall, three quarters (76 per cent) of those who applied for or did work experience used one of these approaches. Students also frequently spoke to family members (37 per cent) or friends (28 per cent)) about finding work experience

[17] See State of the nation 2013: social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain

opportunities. Likelihood to have spoken to family members in particular rose noticeably among graduates from households belonging to higher managerial and professional occupations (43 per cent compared to 37 per cent overall).

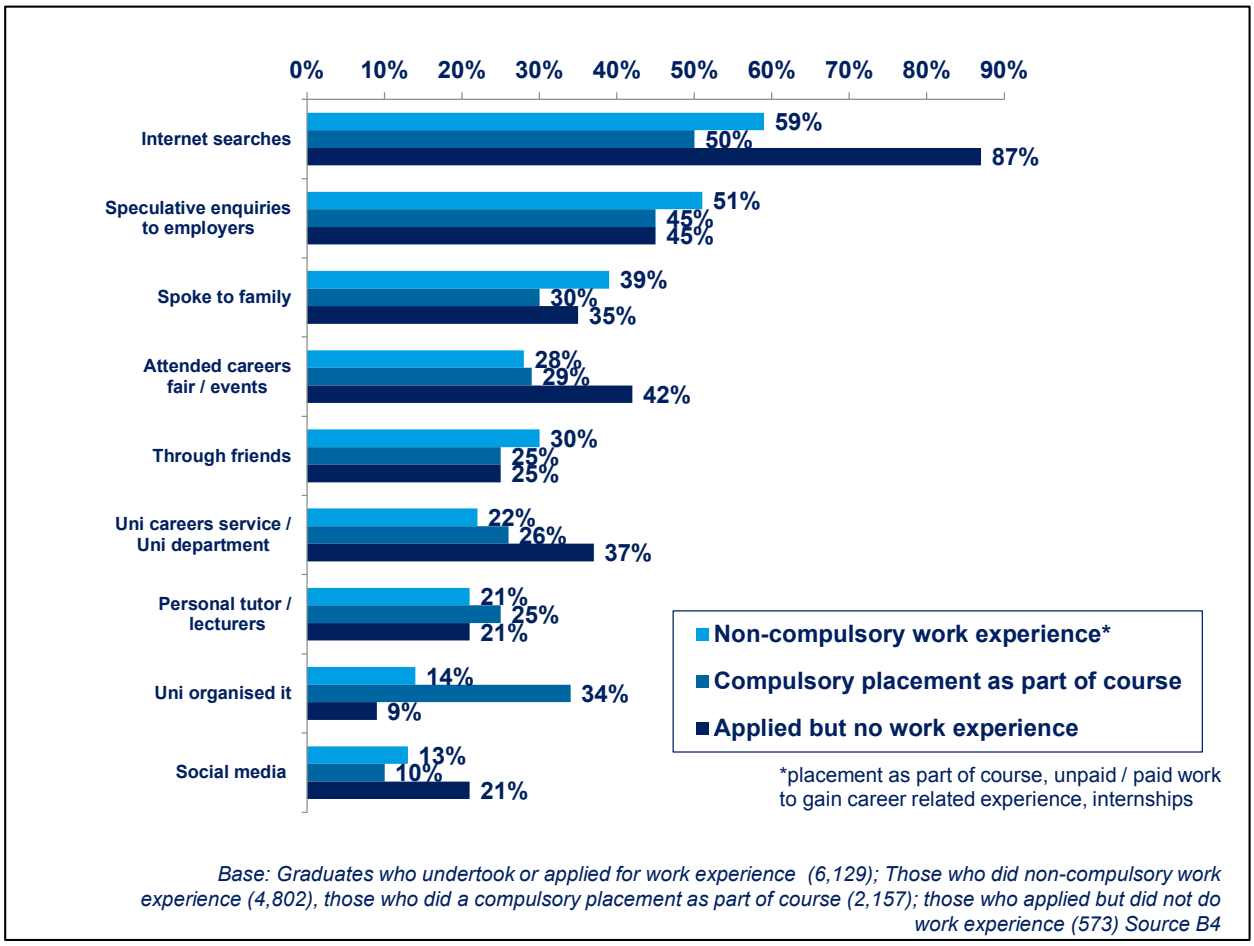
Overall just under half of those who applied for or did work experience either; had their university arrange it for them (18 per cent) **or** used their university in some way to explore opportunities, either via the careers service or department (25 per cent) **or** by speaking to academic staff (21 per cent). Those at TRAC Group C universities were more likely than those at other universities to have used their university to find work experience opportunities (60 per cent did so compared to 51 per cent at TRAC Group F and fewer than 50 per cent from other Groups).

Careers fairs or events were also often used to explore work experience opportunities: 30 per cent of those who undertook work experience used careers fairs to source them. Attending careers fairs / events was notably more common amongst those who attended TRAC Group A/B/C universities, 35 per cent used a careers fair to look for work experience compared to only 14 per cent at F institutions.

Those who achieved better classes of degree were more likely to liaise with academic staff and their careers service, and to attend careers fairs to find work experience opportunities (26 per cent, 30 per cent, 35 per cent respectively of those who obtained a First compared to 18 per cent, 21 per cent, 26 per cent with lower degrees). This group were perhaps more engaged with their studies and tutors and were able to leverage this to secure a placement which may have in turn provided useful experience helping them to academic success.

Different search strategies are associated with different types of work experience, as shown Figure 5.2. The figure also highlights that those who apply for work experience but are not successful in securing any tend to be particularly active in their search activities, perhaps a result of perseverance as some avenues are closed off to them.

Figure 5.2: How those who did a work placement as part of degree, did other work experience or unsuccessfully applied for work experience explored possible opportunities



Base: Graduates who undertook or applied for work experience (6,129); Those who did non-compulsory work experience (4,802), those who did a compulsory placement as part of course (2,157); those who applied but did not do work experience (573) Source B4

As already seen (section 5.2), there is a link between work experience and more general, widely defined proactivity in developing ones career: graduates who access work experience are also more likely to be proactive in developing their career in other ways. The exception to this is where work experience was a compulsory, structured part of their degree. Only around one in seven of those who did a non-compulsory placement as part of their course, an internship or paid / unpaid work related to their career had their university arrange this for them (14 per cent) compared to over one in three (34 per cent) of those whose work placement was a compulsory, structured part of their degree, indicating that graduates who undertook the former types of work experience were necessarily more proactive in furthering their careers at an early stage.

Looking at those who were unsuccessful in their applications for work experience this group were much more likely to have scoured the internet or social media (87 per cent and 42 per cent respectively), and also more likely to have attended a careers fair (21 per cent) or used the university careers service (37 per cent) than those who did secure a placement. They were less likely to have applied speculatively to employers or to have secured a placement through family or friends than those who did non-compulsory work experience.

Those who took the initiative of speculatively approaching employers to arrange experience were also notably more likely to be in employment by the time of the Planning for Success Survey (around half of those who had completed work experience and whose main activity was now employment or further study had directly approached employers compared to a third of those who were unemployed), although there are no notable differences between professional and managerial / non-professional roles, so these placements may have been useful in gaining experience of the workplace but potentially less useful in ultimately securing higher level roles.

There is indication that placements arranged by the university may have been better quality or more helpful in career development and in reaching these higher level roles. Those in professional or managerial level employment by the time of the Planning for Success Survey were more likely to have had their work experience arranged by their university (19 per cent of those in professional or managerial employment had had their work experience arranged by the university compared to 15 per cent of those in non-professional employment, 12 per cent of those studying further, 13 per cent of those unemployed and 16 per cent of those with an 'other' destination). It is not clear why exactly this is the case but for some this may simply reflect the nature / subject of their course, for example those studying Medicine or Teaching would require placements which in many cases the university would have arranged, and they would have clear progression into professional or managerial level roles following completion of their degree.

Those in non-professional employment or who were unemployed by the Planning for Success Survey stage were notably more likely to have relied on internet searches (66 per cent, 64 per cent compared to 58 per cent of those in professional or managerial roles or further study) and family contacts (40 per cent, 45 per cent compared to 36 per cent of those in professional or managerial roles or further study) when finding work experience – this approach may have led to a less directly useful placement than those who used the university or approached employers directly.

Work experience and finding employment

Work experience leading directly to a job with the same employer

For a notable number of graduates their work experience led directly to employment. Just over a quarter of graduates who had done work experience (27 per cent) had a resulting job offer from the employer who had provided the experience, with most but not all taking up the offer (65 per cent of those who were offered a job, equating to 17 per cent of those who had undertaken work experience).

Men (31 per cent compared to 24 per cent of women) and those who got Firsts (30 per cent compared to 26 per cent of those with lower degrees) were most likely to be offered jobs by their work experience provider.

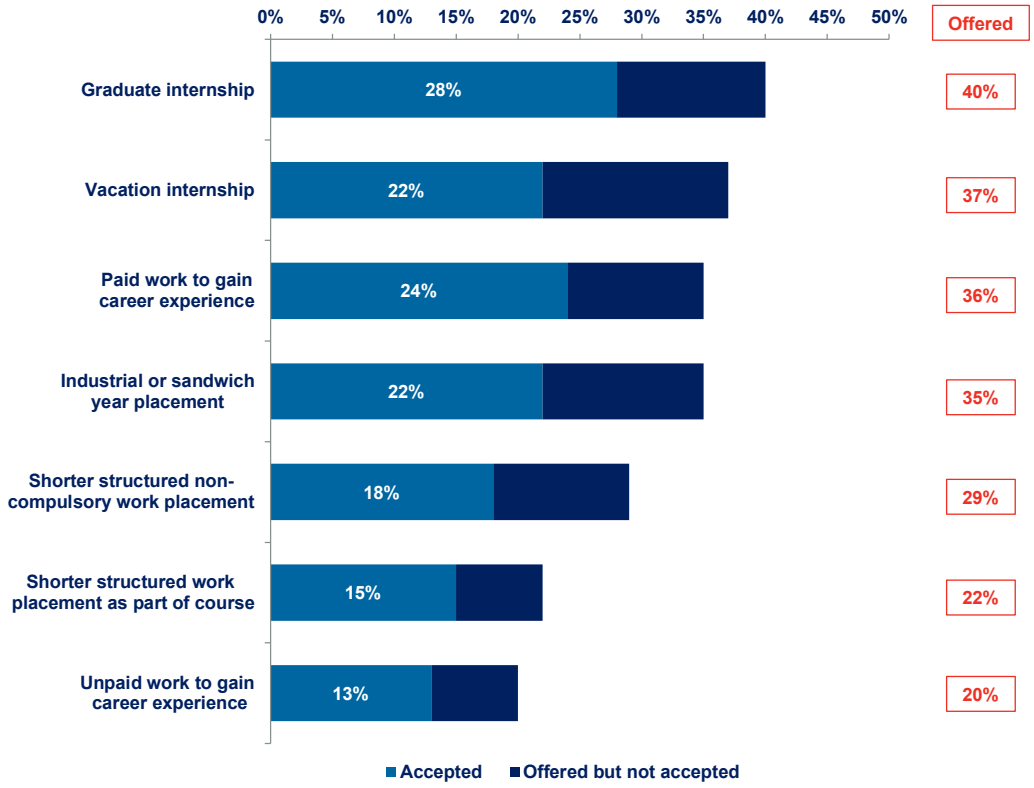
Those from TRAC Group A or B universities were more likely to reject the job offer than those at other types of university (40 per cent of those offered rejected the offer compared to 29 per cent) reflecting that higher proportions of these graduates opted for further study upon completing university. It was also the case that those who used their university careers service were more likely to reject the job offer (41 per cent compared to 28 per

cent of non-users). Perhaps these graduates had already identified / secured other options.

Internships (especially graduate internships), paid work and industrial placements / sandwich years were most likely to result in jobs, with over a third of graduates that had undertaken this type of work experience offered employment, as shown in Figure 5.5. Those on graduate internships were most likely to accept the role with 28 per cent doing so. This perhaps reflects the nature of graduate internships, which are often explicitly intended to lead directly to employment and are usually entered into upon completion of studies, but it may also reflect the quality of work experience provided (and / or of the graduates who undertake them).

Unpaid work, the most common form of work experience, was least likely to result in a job offer with only 20 per cent receiving an offer. Unpaid work experience may perhaps provide access only to roles always filled by unpaid trainees. As reported above Creative Arts graduates were more likely to have taken on paid and especially unpaid work, some of these roles may be in this sector where funding limitations have resulted in unpaid roles.

Figure 5.3: Proportion of those who undertook different forms of work experience who were offered and accepted jobs from the employer who provided the experience



Base: Those who undertook university work experience (5,556) Source Planning for Success Survey question B5

The qualitative research found examples of graduates whose work experience had led directly to employment

That specific job had a major impact on my career because if I hadn't had been doing that I wouldn't be where I am now. Also whilst working for X they started a graduate scheme that you could only do it if you'd already been working for the company which I had been and without it I wouldn't have got the job afterwards....

Female graduate, Mathematical Sciences

Overview of outcomes for those doing work experience

The survey cannot ascertain the nature of the jobs that graduates secured through their work experience, or whether these were jobs which were held long-term (and in particular at the Planning for Success Survey stage). More generally, however, it is possible to trace the extent to which having undertaken work experience is associated with successfully accessing and maintaining employment. From this perspective, it is clear that those who had done work experience consistently saw more positive outcomes. For those that had completed work experience whilst at university or in the six months following;

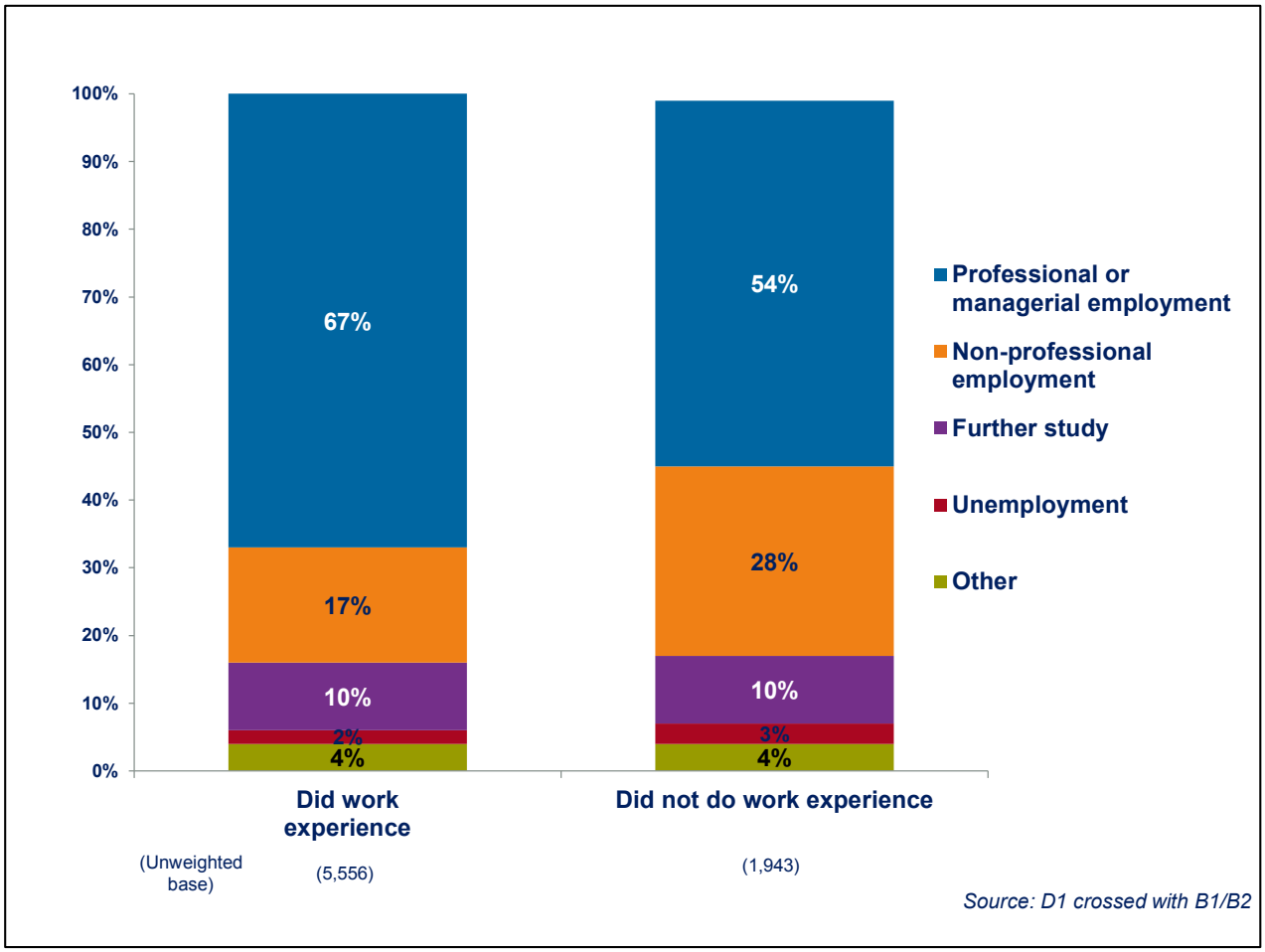
- Their main activity at the six-month DLHE survey was more likely to be employment (71 per cent) than those who had not done work experience (65 per cent);

- They were then more likely to be working in a professional or managerial role at the Planning for Success Survey stage, as shown in Figure 5.3 (67 per cent of those who did work experience were in a professional or managerial role compared to only 54 per cent of those who had not done work experience);

Moreover, it appears that academic success and work experience, with those who achieved a first-class degree were more likely to have done either a work placement as part of their course or paid or unpaid work to gain career related experience whilst at university than those who obtained lower degree awards (70 per cent compared with 61 per cent of those who achieved a 2:1, 52 per cent of those who achieved a 2:2 and 53 per cent of those who achieved a Third)[18].

[18] This excludes those who did work experience in the six months after university which presumably could not influence their academic success as they had completed their course, and also excludes those who did internships where it is not clear whether they were during or after university

Figure 5.4: Main activities at the Planning for Success Survey stage amongst those who did and did not do work experience



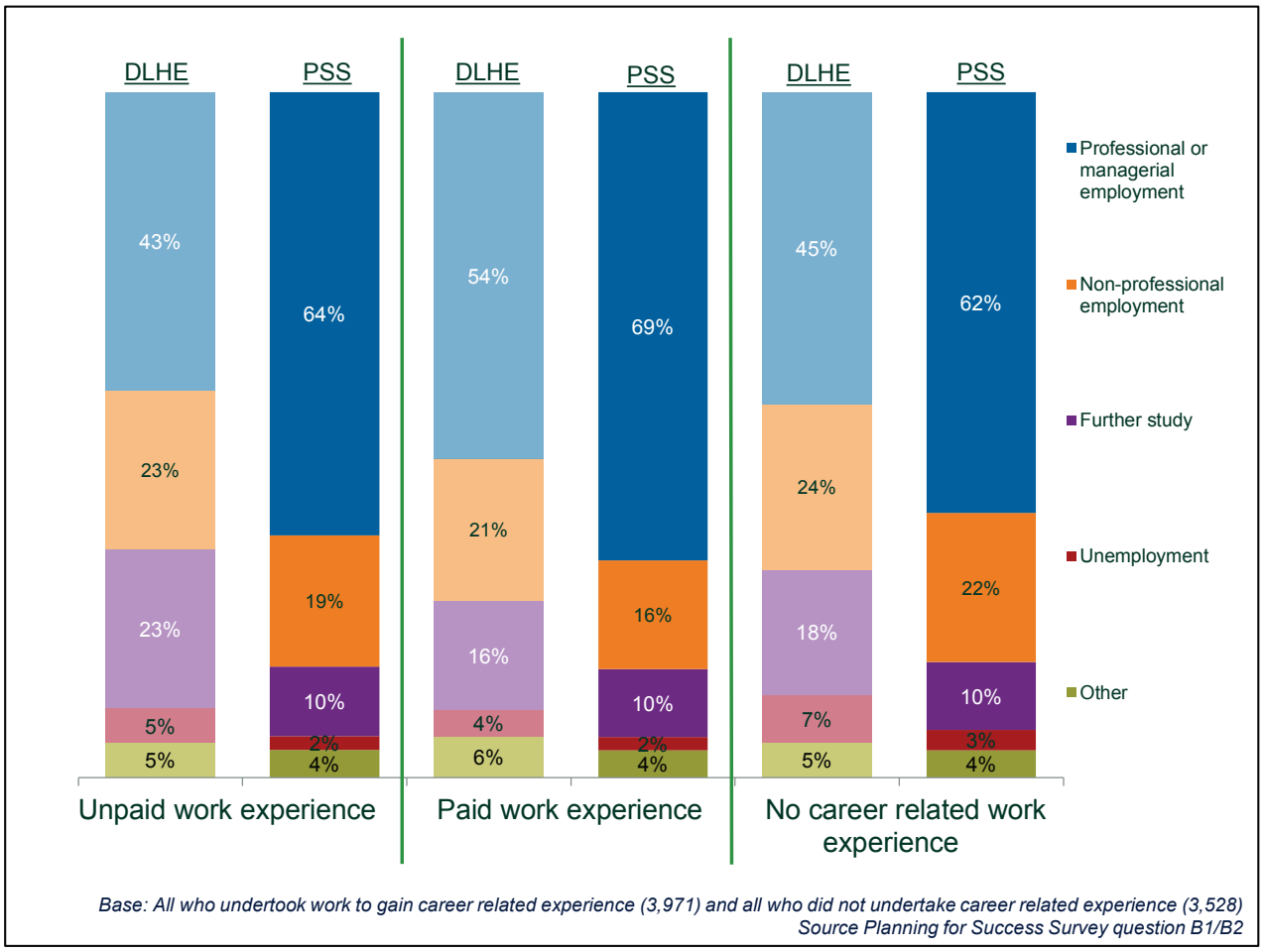
Those who were in a professional or managerial level role at the Planning for Success Survey stage two and a half years after university were more likely to have undertaken all forms of work experience (with the exception of unpaid work experience) than those who were in a non-professional role or who were unemployed.

The sections below look more specifically at the outcomes associated with each form of work experience

Paid and unpaid work to gain career related experience

Paid career-related work experience appears more helpful than unpaid work in moving into professional or managerial level employment immediately after degree completion. At the DLHE survey, six months after graduation, graduates who had undertaken paid work to gain career related experience were more likely to have been in professional or managerial employment (and a little less likely to be in non-professional employment) than those who had undertaken unpaid work experience or no career-related work experience (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Main activity at DLHE and the Planning for Success Survey stage amongst those who had undertaken paid and unpaid career related work experience and those who did not



Base: All who undertook work to gain career related experience (3,971) and all who did not undertake career related experience (3,528)
Source Planning for Success Survey question B1/B2

Looking longer term, by the time of the Planning for Success Survey, it is still the case that those who had undertaken paid work experience whilst at university or shortly afterwards were more likely to be in a professional or managerial role, and less likely to be in non-professional employment than those who had done unpaid work experience or no work-related experience. However, at this later survey point, the difference between the groups had closed markedly.

Graduates who had undertaken unpaid work to gain career related experience were notably more likely to be in education at the point of the first DLHE survey point than those who had taken on paid work or those who had done neither paid nor unpaid work. However, by the time of the Planning for Success Survey this gap had again closed.

It appears that some graduates in the group who participated in unpaid work experience followed an alternative, longer path to professional or managerial level occupations via study, unpaid work or initial non-professional roles. This could possibly be due to competition in the sector they wished to enter, or uncertainty about career direction but may also for some have reflected the quality of the work experience they had on their CV.

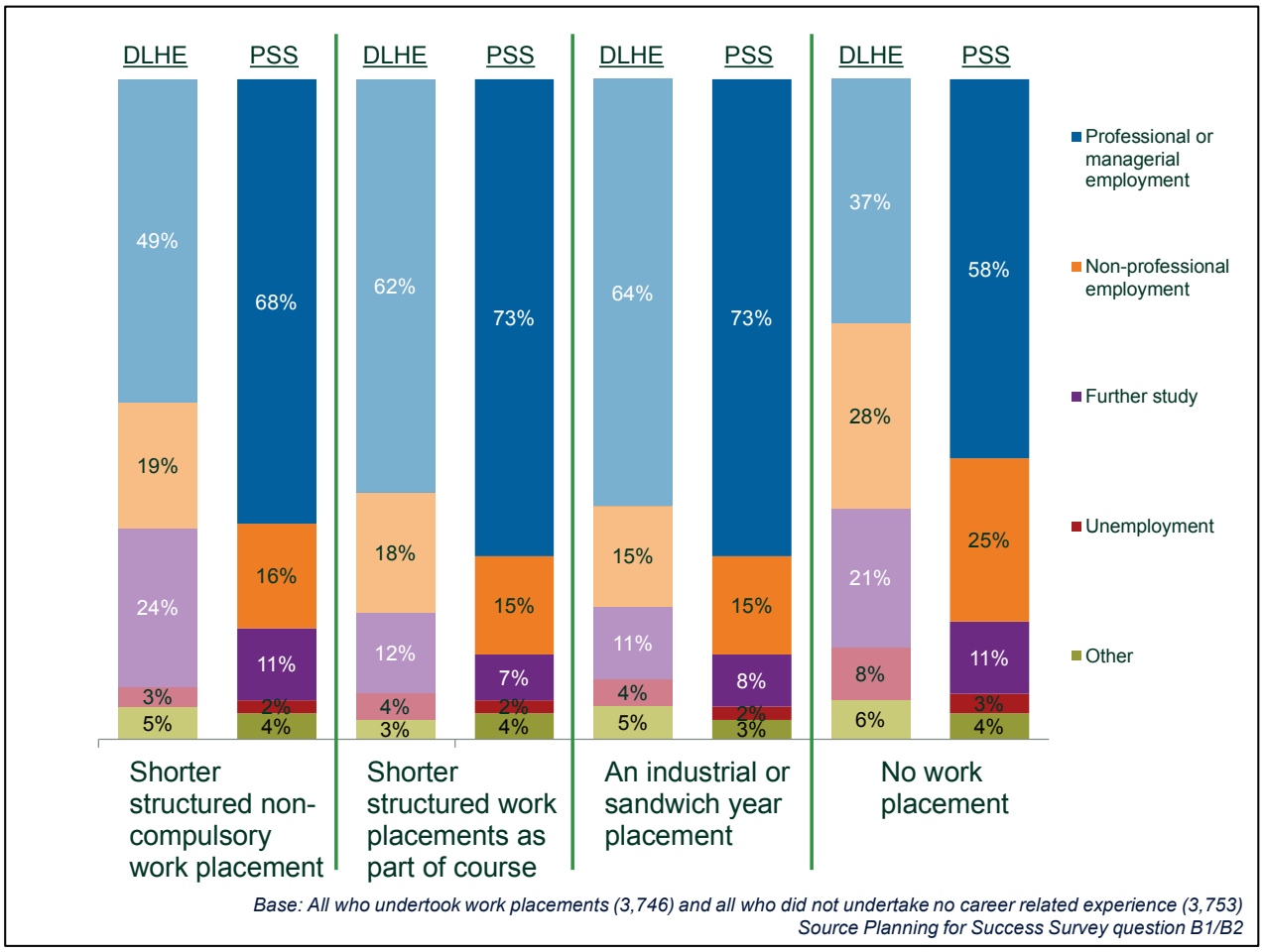
The qualitative research found examples of graduates who did not especially value their unpaid work experience.

> *There was an element of filling my time during the summer holidays…It didn't really contribute [to career outcome].*
>
> **Female graduate, Arts**

Work placements as part of degree course (industrial / sandwich years, shorter placements)

Compulsory work placements as part of a degree (an industrial / sandwich year or a shorter structured placement) are particularly likely to lead to positive outcomes. This form of work experience appears to be especially successful in helping graduates into professional or managerial level occupations. To some extent this will simply reflect the directed career path for those studying more vocational areas such as Medicine and Teaching that typically have clearer progression routes into professional roles and for which these types of placements are necessary, but there are graduates of other subject areas in this group too who did compulsory work placements and progressed into professional or managerial roles.

Figure 5.6: Main activity at DLHE and the Planning for Success Survey amongst those who had undertaken work experience placements as part of their degree and those who did not



Base: All who undertook work placements (3,746) and all who did not undertake no career related experience (3,753)
Source Planning for Success Survey question B1/B2

Comparing the outcomes of those who undertook different types of work placements as part of their degree course it is evident that those who participated in industrial or sandwich year placements and those who participated in compulsory shorter structured placements had more similarity in outcomes than those who undertook other shorter structured placements, especially at the initial DLHE survey point. Those who had done either of the former were more likely to have been in professional or managerial employment (64 per cent, 62 per cent) than those who had taken on a non-compulsory placement (49 per cent) and were markedly more likely to be in professional or managerial employment than those who had not undertaken any form of work placement as part of their degree (just 37 per cent in professional or managerial employment at DLHE), as shown in Figure 5.6.

A notably high proportion of those who had not undertaken any form of work placement as part of their degree had moved into non-professional employment upon completion of their degree (28 per cent compared to 19 per cent of those who had undertaken a non-compulsory short placement, 18 per cent of those who had undertaken a compulsory short placement and 15 per cent of those who had undertaken a sandwich / industrial year placement). This pattern holds true at the Planning for Success Survey point, with those

who had not participated in any form of placement notably more likely to be in non-professional employment than those who had undertaken a work placement as part of their degree, indicating the usefulness of structured work placements in enabling students to move into higher level employment more quickly.

It appears that *not* undertaking some form of work placement as part of a course leaves graduates particularly unlikely to enter a professional or managerial role upon completing their degree, although the difference was less marked by the Planning for Success Survey point. Those who had not undertaken any form of work placement were less likely to be in professional or managerial employment (especially at DLHE but also at the Planning for Success Survey point) and more likely to be in non-professional employment than those who had not undertaken other forms of work experience (paid or unpaid work or an internship), with only 37 per cent in a professional or managerial role at DLHE compared to 45 per cent of amongst those who had not undertaken paid or unpaid work and 43 per cent of those who had not participated in an internship. Graduates who had not participated in any form of work placement as part of their degree were also twice as likely to be unemployed at the DLHE survey point than their counterparts who had done so (8 per cent), although by the Planning for Success Survey unemployment levels were similar across all groups.

Internships

Completing an internship appears to aid the move into professional or managerial employment both initially but also longer term, with few differences in outcomes between those who undertook graduate or vacation internships. As would be expected there is a link between wanting (and obtaining) a professional or managerial level job and doing an internship, with those who applied to *graduate level*[19] jobs three times as likely to have done an internship (25 per cent compared to just 8 per cent of those who did not apply for *graduate level* roles). It may well be that this group who undertook internships were especially focussed on obtaining professional or managerial level employment.

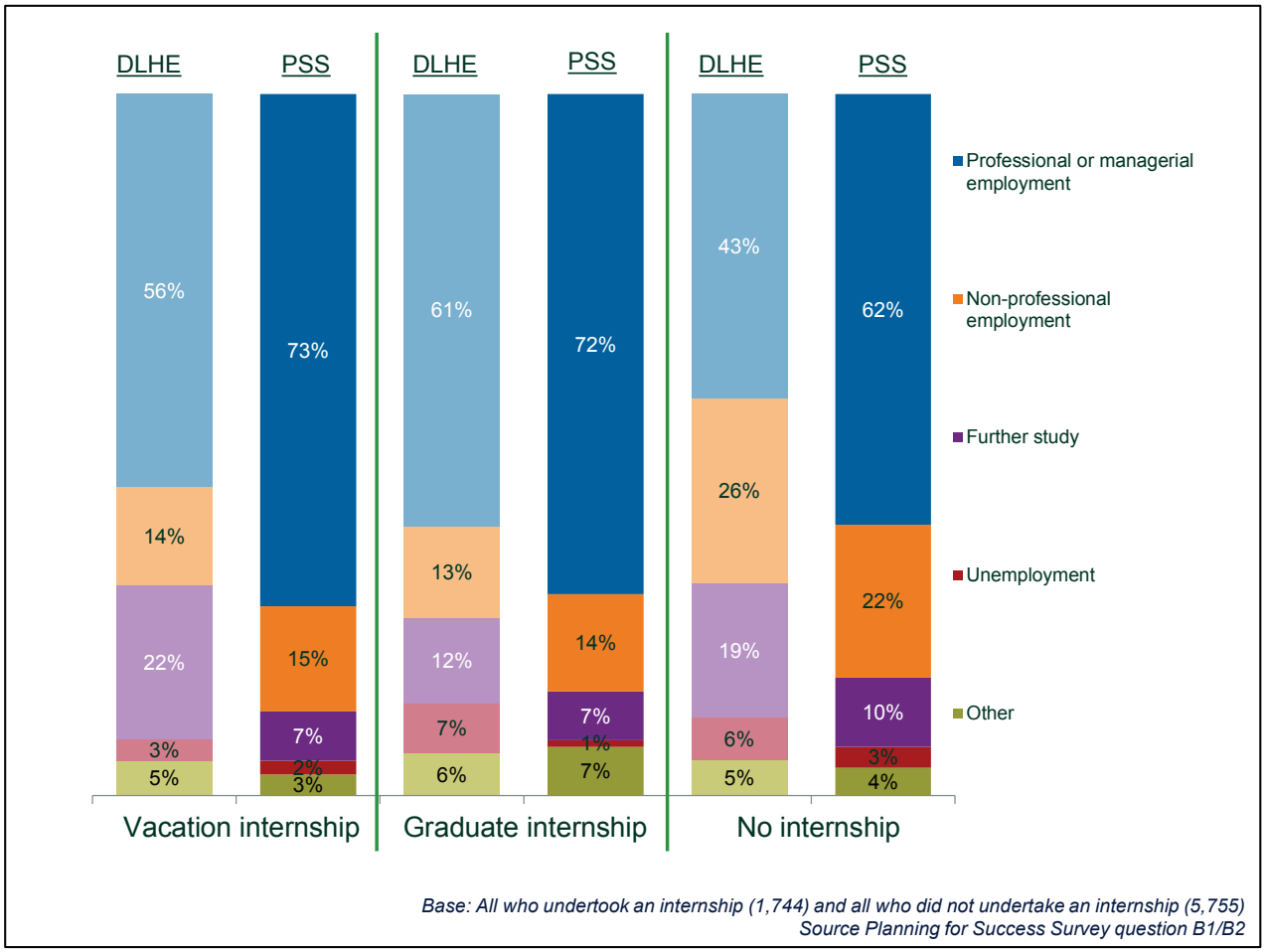
Those who participated in vacation or graduate internships were more likely than those who did neither to have successfully moved into professional or managerial level employment soon after university (56 per cent and 61 per cent respectively at DLHE point compared to 43 per cent), as shown in Figure 5.7.This places graduate internships on a par with compulsory work placements which were part of degree courses in terms of the high proportion moving into professional or managerial employment early.

The proportion of those who undertook an internship who moved into non-professional employment was particularly low, with only around one in seven doing so compared to around a quarter of those who had not participated in an internship.

---

[19] Graduates were asked about the level of jobs they had applied for and assessed at an individual level whether they would categorise the roles as at a *graduate level*. A distinction is made in the report between *graduate level jobs*; where graduates assessed themselves the level of the jobs they applied for; and 'professional or managerial' roles which have been classified (by IFF) using graduates' job title and job duties and coding against the SOC classification. All roles falling into the top 3 SOC codes are defined as professional or managerial'.

Figure 5.7: Main activity at DLHE and Planning for Success Survey amongst those who had undertaken graduate or vacation internships and those who did not



Base: All who undertook an internship (1,744) and all who did not undertake an internship (5,755)
Source Planning for Success Survey question B1/B2

Those who had participated in a vacation internship were especially likely to have been studying at DLHE (22 per cent compared to 12 per cent of those who did graduate internships). This would have presumably been undertaken during the university holidays, then allowing them to return for the new academic year. This group who had undertaken vacation internships saw a more marked shift of 17 percentage points in the proportion in professional or managerial employment between DLHE and the Planning for Success Survey (from 56 per cent to 73 per cent), again perhaps reflecting that for some the first step after completing their degree was further study rather than employment.

CASE STUDY

A graduate who undertook several work experience placements. She is currently between jobs and is satisfied with the career progress she has made.

Jane, studied Marketing at a TRAC Group A university, undertook an internship and other non-compulsory work experience.

Jane undertook three separate work experience placements, all of which she organised herself using the university careers service. Although she did not have a career plan before university she was proactive in arranging paid and unpaid work to gain career experience, her placements were not compulsory. She sought work experience as she thought it would be necessary to get a job and would increase her chances of getting a job she wanted.

Initially she wasn't sure which field she did want to work in (whether in cultural, creative or marketing sectors). Her first role was as a marketing assistant in a cultural marketing organisation, and then in her third year she did an internship at an Arts charity. She found the placements very valuable in terms of providing her with general skills such as project management as well as specific knowledge, for example in how to use Photoshop. Being able to cite relevant, specific experience helped her when applying for jobs. The experience also gave her a broader outlook and helped her decide what type of role she wanted to do.

> *I thought it would be something which was necessary to get a job after uni. By trying out different work experiences I thought if I wanted to go into that later then I'd have work experience to back it up.*

She did paid work whilst at university too but this was less useful for longer term career development.

Jane now works in marketing (level of role not known). She has just finished a contract and is due to start a new job soon. She's happy with the roles she has been employed in.

Reasons work experience not undertaken

A quarter of graduates in the Planning for Success Survey cohort had not undertaken work experience whilst at university or in the six months following; around a third of these (8 per cent of all graduates) had applied but been unsuccessful.

Those at TRAC Group D / E institutions were more likely to have been unsuccessful in their applications than those at other institutions (10 per cent compared to 7 per cent across TRAC Group A-C and 4 per cent in TRAC Group F). Also men were more likely to have been unsuccessful than women (10 per cent compared to 6 per cent). Both of these types of graduates were also less likely to have applied at all (22 per cent of TRAC Group D/E graduates did not apply compared to 17 per cent average across TRAC Group A/B/C/F graduates, 21 per cent of male graduates did not apply compared to 17 per cent of female). However, there is evidence that those who did apply – albeit unsuccessfully - were more proactive in other ways about their career than those who had not applied at all, with heavier use of the university careers service.

The most common reason given for deciding not to apply was that the student was focused on their studies (cited by 45 per cent). Those who achieved a First (who were more likely to continue in education) were more likely to have wished to focus on their studies than those who were awarded lower class degrees.

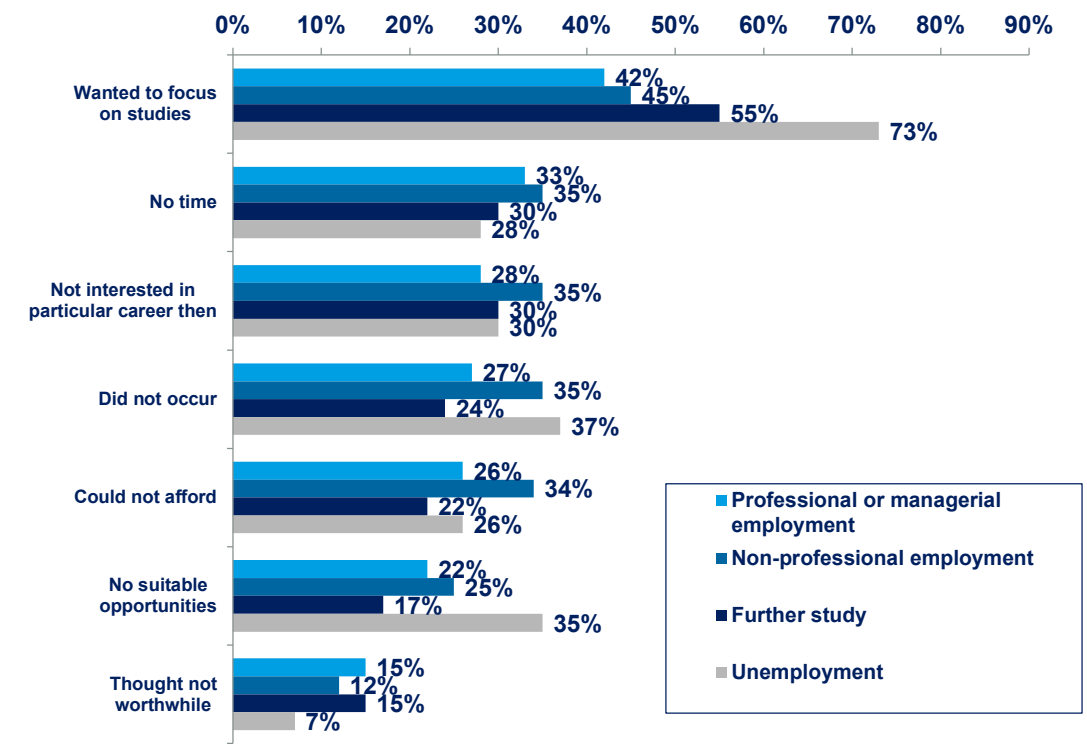
Other relatively frequent answers, cited by around a third of those who did not apply for work experience, were that they did not have time (33 per cent), did not have an interest in pursuing a particular career at that point (30 per cent), it did not occur to them (29 per cent) or they could not afford to do so (28 per cent). The more practical concerns about lack of time and money were more commonly raised by female graduates than male (37 per cent, 31 per cent respectively versus 29 per cent, 25 per cent).

Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of non-applicants said they did not apply as there were no suitable placements / opportunities available (i.e. a supply-side issue that was not necessarily because they did not want to do work experience). Only a small number (14 per cent) thought work experience would not be worth their while.

Those who were unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage stand out in terms of their approach to work experience and their reasons for not applying for it. They were more likely to say both that they had wanted to focus on their studies than those with other outcomes (73 per cent compared to 44 per cent on average across other outcome groups) and that they could not find any suitable opportunities (35 per cent versus 22 per cent), perhaps indications of a lack of support or other disadvantage in their circumstances, or post-rationalisation.

Those who were in non-professional employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage were notably more likely to say they could not afford to do work experience (34 per cent); they were also more likely to have taken on paid work unrelated to their career aspirations whilst at university / upon finishing as reported below in section 5.6. This may have then restricted their options after university: because they were in (unrelated) paid employment they had less scope to undertake work experience more directed towards a positive career choice.

Figure 5.8: Reasons for not applying for work experience by main activity outcomes at the Planning for Success Survey stage.



Base: Graduates who did not apply for work experience; in professional or managerial employment 726; in non-professional employment 388, In education 157; unemployed 39 Source B3A

In the qualitative research, graduates who had not done work experience generally expressed regret and said that if given the chance again they would have taken it. As highlighted above common reasons for not doing work experience were concerns around time, cost and the need to do paid work.

I would have done if it [work experience] didn't require too much time. I had a part-time job as well which helped with my studies, so to do that as well as studying and looking for work experience would have been quite a lot.

Female graduate, Joint Honours

Outcomes for those who did not do work experience

Lack of work experience may have contributed to less positive outcomes later, with those who were unemployed at DLHE and those who were unemployed or in non-professional employment at the later Planning for Success Survey less likely to have completed work experience.

- At DLHE, 70 per cent of those who had not done work experience were in employment, 23 per cent studying and 11 per cent unemployed (compared to 77 per cent, 22 per cent and 6 per cent respectively amongst those who had done work experience)

- At the later Planning for Success Survey point 35 per cent of those classed as unemployed and 37 per cent of those in non-professional roles had not completed work experience whilst at university or in the six months following, compared to only 22 per cent of those in professional or managerial employment and 27 per cent of those in further study, as shown in Figure 5.8 below.

Those who were awarded lower class degrees were also more likely not to have completed work experience, again indicating that work experience appears to be associated with higher academic achievement (37 per cent of those with a Third and 34 per cent of those with a 2:2 had not done work experience compared with 26 per cent of those with a 2:1 and 19 per cent of those with a First). This could be a reflection of the proactive approach graduates took to both their academic study and career planning. It may be that opportunities to take up work experience were more limited after university for those with lower degree classes but generally work experience was largely undertaken whilst still studying. This could indicate that work experience is academically beneficial or that those who undertake work experience are more motivated in general.

It is possible to explore to some extent whether a different type of student applies for work experience in the first place and whether they would have gone on to professional or managerial level employment regardless of their work experience, or whether it is the actual work experience which helps them into professional or managerial level roles. This research indicates that those who unsuccessfully applied for work experience have more in common with those who did not apply than with those who successfully applied, i.e. it is not *wanting* to undertake work experience which splits students into two groups (one which goes on to more positive employment and study outcomes than the other), but rather having actually done work experience. It is therefore not that only a certain 'type' of student applies for work experience, but it appears only a certain type successfully undertakes and benefits from work experience.

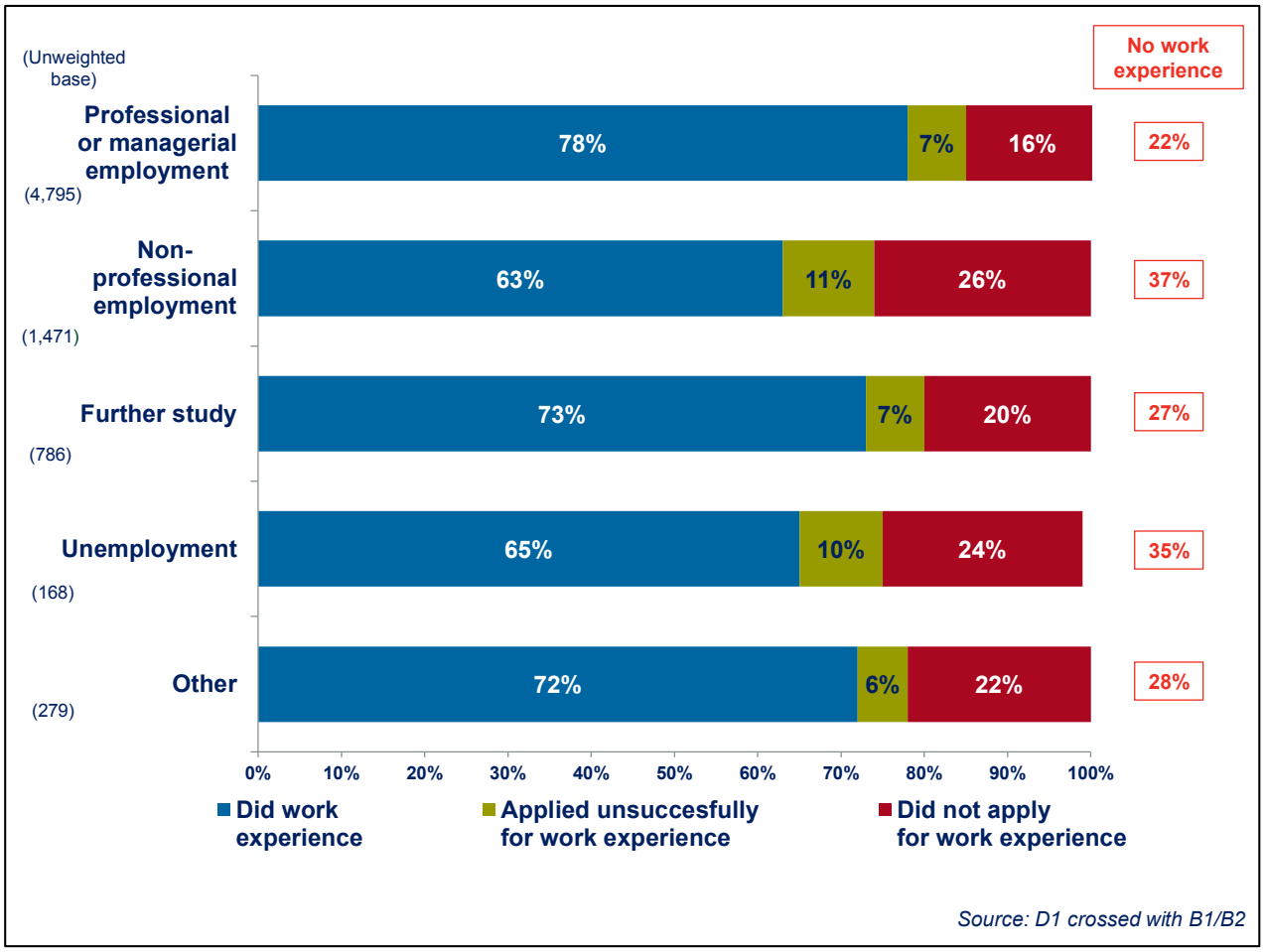
- In terms of the graduates' background; men, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, those at TRAC Group D/E universities and those who achieved lower class degrees were more likely to have unsuccessfully applied for work experience or to have not applied at all than; women, those from higher socio-economic groups, those at TRAC Group A/B universities and those who achieved a First or 2:1.

- Those who had only a vague idea or no career plan at all both before university and upon finishing were more likely to have applied unsuccessfully or not have applied for work experience at all than those who had an exact plan or a good idea. These students perhaps were not applying in a specific / directed manner, and although some may have wanted to undertake work experience they may not have had a clear idea on the type of role or sector.

- Similarly those who used their university careers service less or not at all were more likely to have applied unsuccessfully or not to have applied for work experience than those who did take these steps to further their career aspirations. These graduates perhaps were less proactive about their careers in general, and although some may have applied they perhaps did not put as much into the process as those who were successful.

Those who at the Planning for Success Survey point were unemployed or in a non-professional role were more likely not to have applied (24 per cent, 26 per cent respectively compared to 20 per cent of those in further study and 16 per cent of those in professional or managerial employment) or to have been unsuccessful in their applications for work experience (10 per cent, 11 per cent respectively compared to seven per cent of those in professional or managerial employment or further study), as shown in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9: Whether those in each outcome group the Planning for Success Survey had applied for and undertaken work experience



Amongst those who did not apply for work experience, those graduates who were unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage were more likely than those in employment or further study (35 per cent compared to 23 per cent) to have reported they did not apply for work experience as they could not find a suitable opportunity i.e. it was not a personal choice not to do work experience. These students did not have particular barriers to doing work experience such as time or lack of interest, but having not done work experience they see different outcomes from their peers who did.

Those who did not apply for work experience and were in non-professional roles at the Planning for Success Survey point were more likely to have said they did not do work experience because they did not have a particular career interest, and also more likely to have said they could not afford to do work experience than those who did not apply but were in professional or managerial roles at this point. Amongst the group who moved into non-professional employment there is some indication of a barrier to being able to take up work experience opportunities as well as the need to move into non-professional employment rather than be able to wait for a professional or managerial level role, or have time to explore / develop their career aspirations in more directed way.

Undertaking paid work

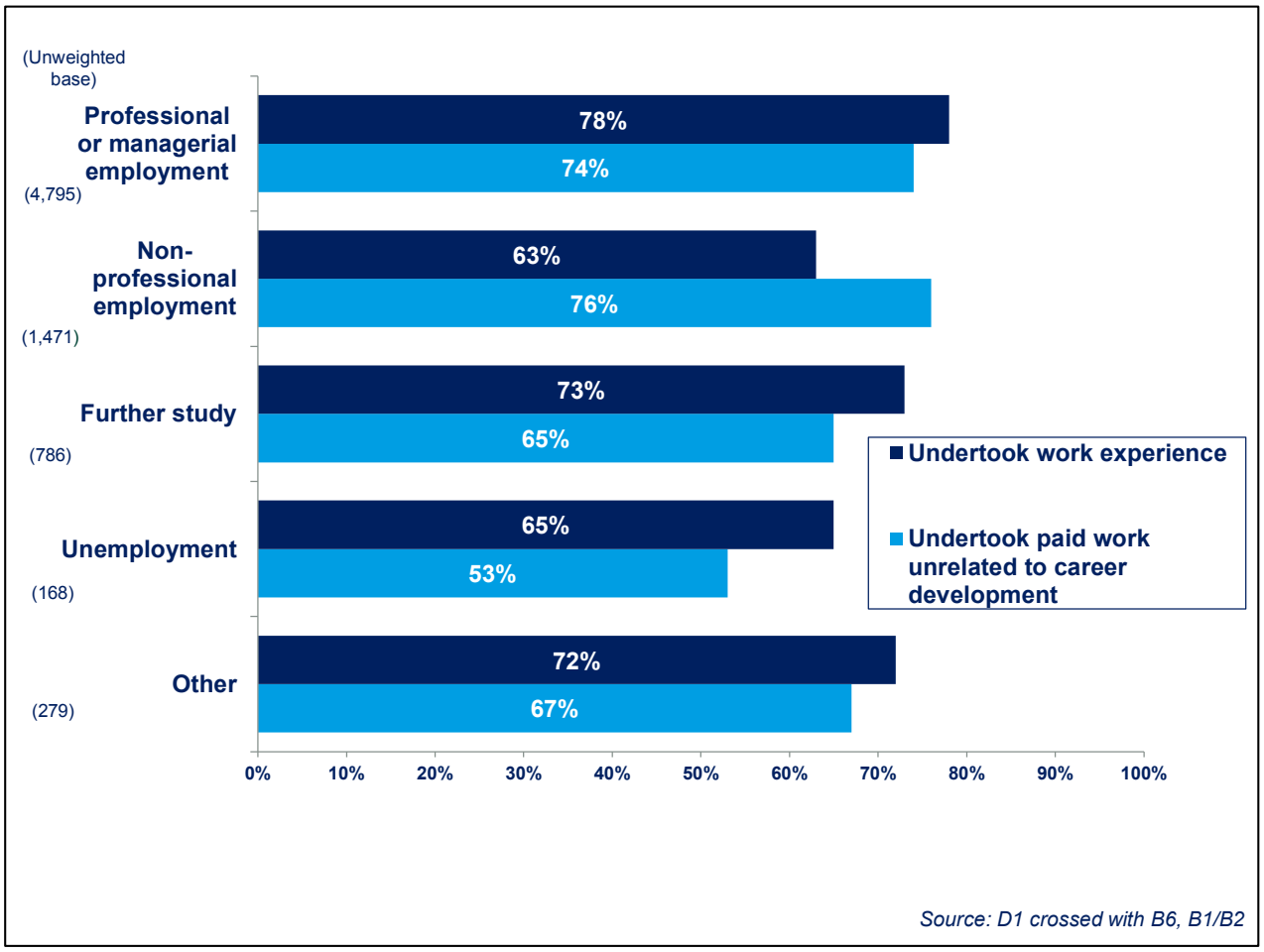
The survey also looked at the extent to which graduates engaged in paid employment which was not designed to gain work experience. Overall almost three quarters of

graduates (73 per cent) had done paid work whilst at university or in the six months following, separately from any work experience specifically to gain career related experience as outlined above. Those at TRAC Group F institutions were more likely to have undertaken paid work (81 per cent had done so compared to 72 per cent average across those from other Groups). Female graduates were also more likely to have done paid work than male (77 per cent compared to 68 per cent).

In terms of proactivity in developing a career those who had less definite career plans and/or did not use the university careers service were more likely to have undertaken general, non-career specific paid work than those who were more proactive in these ways.

Combining work experience and paid work was widespread (72 per cent of those who had completed work experience also did other paid work) although paid work was a little less common amongst those who had done work experience than those who had not; amongst those who had not done work experience 75 per cent did other paid work, which may indicate they may have had less time to enable them to take up other work.

Figure 5.10: Whether those in each outcome group at the Planning for Success Survey point had undertaken work experience or paid work unrelated to career development whilst at university or in the six months following



Those who were in employment six months after university were more likely to have undertaken non-career related paid work than those who were studying or unemployed (78 per cent had done so compared to 64 per cent and 54 per cent respectively). At the later Planning for Success Survey stage, those in employment were more likely to have done paid work than those studying further and those who were unemployed, but there is no difference between those who were in professional or managerial and non-professional employment. Whilst three quarters of those in either professional or managerial employment (74 per cent) or non-professional employment (76 per cent) had done paid work only two thirds of those studying (65 per cent) and less than half of those unemployed (53 per cent) had done paid work. This indicates that undertaking paid work whilst at university, or in the six months following, does help in gaining employment it does not necessarily help in gaining professional or managerial level employment.

However, although some graduates said their paid work did not in any way help with their career others provided illustrations of how it helped develop softer skills such as team work or communication. A minority of those interviewed during the qualitative research had moved directly into roles with their employer, though for some this was due to a lack of other options. This may reflect why those who did paid work were more likely to move into

non-professional roles. It may be they lack time to pursue other roles, employers are pigeon-holing them due to their CV or they see quicker progression or other benefits in staying.

This chapter demonstrated the value of work experience; the majority of graduates had been involved in some form of work experience whilst at university or in the six months following and those that had were more likely to be working in professional or managerial *level occupations by the* Planning for Success Survey stage. *The next chapter will explore other types of career preparation activities graduates choose to engage in aside from work experience and seeking careers advice.*

Chapter 6 Other CV building activities

Chapter Summary

Overall 70 per cent of graduates had participated in at least one CV building activity either while at university or in the six months after. The most common activity was volunteering work, but relatively high numbers were active in non-academic university life and took on additional courses to build specific skills.

Those who had higher academic ability (attended TRAC Group A/B universities and achieved higher degree classifications) and who had done work experience were more likely to have further boosted their employability through these activities, perhaps indicating a need to distinguish themselves from their peers in competitive sectors or motivation to follow a particular career path. Those studying in the areas of Engineering and Architecture or the Arts were particularly likely to have taken on a greater number of CV building activities.

Female graduates and those whose main activity was part-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey were more likely to have done volunteering work whilst male graduates were more likely to have taken up the structured opportunities to demonstrate leadership or team work provided by university life.

Those whose main activity was further study or full-time professional or managerial employment by the Planning for Success Survey were more likely to have engaged in most of the listed activities but especially to have been society committee members, or represented their university in a competitive capacity.

Those whose main activity was non-professional employment or unemployment at the Planning for Success Survey were least likely to have engaged in nearly all CV building activities so for some this may have limited their options.

This section of the report looks at the extent to which graduates engaged in activities other than work experience to enhance their CV, and which types of graduates were more likely to do so. It compares the level of participation in these activities between those who later moved into employment, further study and unemployment.

After answering questions about work experience graduates were asked if they had engaged in any other CV building activities whilst at university or in the six months afterwards[20].

[20] These were presented in a specific list (as shown in Figure 6.1). This approach did not capture all possible activities but during the pilot phase of the study when respondents were asked if they had done anything else to improve their employability (in addition to those activities listed) no other common activity emerged.

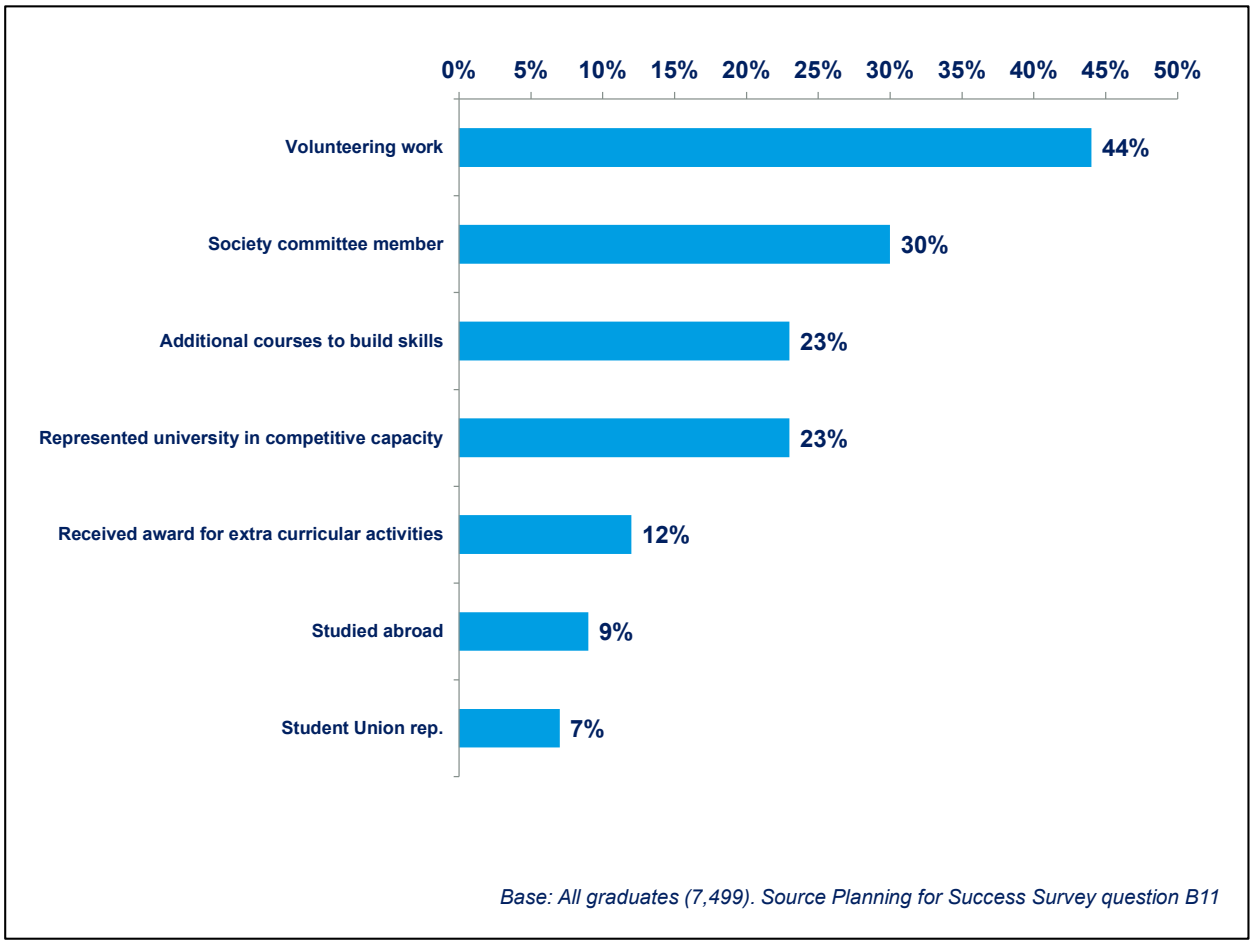
Types of CV building activities

Overall 70 per cent had engaged in at least one of the CV building activities listed either while at university or in the six months after. The most common activity was volunteering work, undertaken by 44 per cent of graduates as shown in Figure 6.1.

Activities linking with university life were also relatively common, with 30 per cent of graduates reporting they had been a society committee member, and 23 per cent that they had represented their university in a competitive capacity (e.g. in sport). A small minority (7 per cent) had been a Student Union representative.

Just under a quarter of graduates (23 per cent) had taken on additional study – courses to build specific skills (e.g. presentations, IT, CV writing, maths or language skills). And around one in ten (nine per cent) had gained experience of studying abroad.

Figure 6.1: Proportion of graduates who engaged in CV building activities (other than work experience)



Base: All graduates (7,499). Source Planning for Success Survey question B11

This list, while not exhaustive, should have captured the actions most frequently undertaken by graduates to improve their CV.

Graduates who were more likely to undertake CV building activities

Overall those who attended TRAC Group A or B universities were more likely to have undertaken CV building activities (84 per cent and 78 per cent respectively had done at least one activity listed compared to 61 per cent on average across those in TRAC Group C to F). Those who achieved higher class degrees were also more likely to have participated in at least one activity compared to those with lower class degrees (72 per cent of those with a First or 2:1 compared to 64 per cent of those with a 2:2 or a Third). It does not therefore appear that these activities were taken on to some way compensate for a weaker academic background, instead they further improved employability.

This may reflect that some of these students were positioning themselves ready to apply for jobs in competitive areas and wanted to distinguish themselves from their peers, those who achieved higher level qualifications were not simply relying on their academic achievements to develop their career. Indeed graduates who reported they had primarily applied to *graduate level* jobs were more likely to have been society committee members or to have done additional courses to build their skills than those who did not apply to *graduate level* jobs. This would indicate deliberate action to build their CV to boost their applications.

Generally those who were more proactive in furthering their career were also more likely to have engaged in CV building activities; 80 per cent of those who were heavier users of their university careers service had undertaken one of these activities, 77 per cent of medium users had, 75 per cent of light users and just 64 per cent of non-users. This indicates that CV building activities were consciously used alongside other actions to help develop their career.

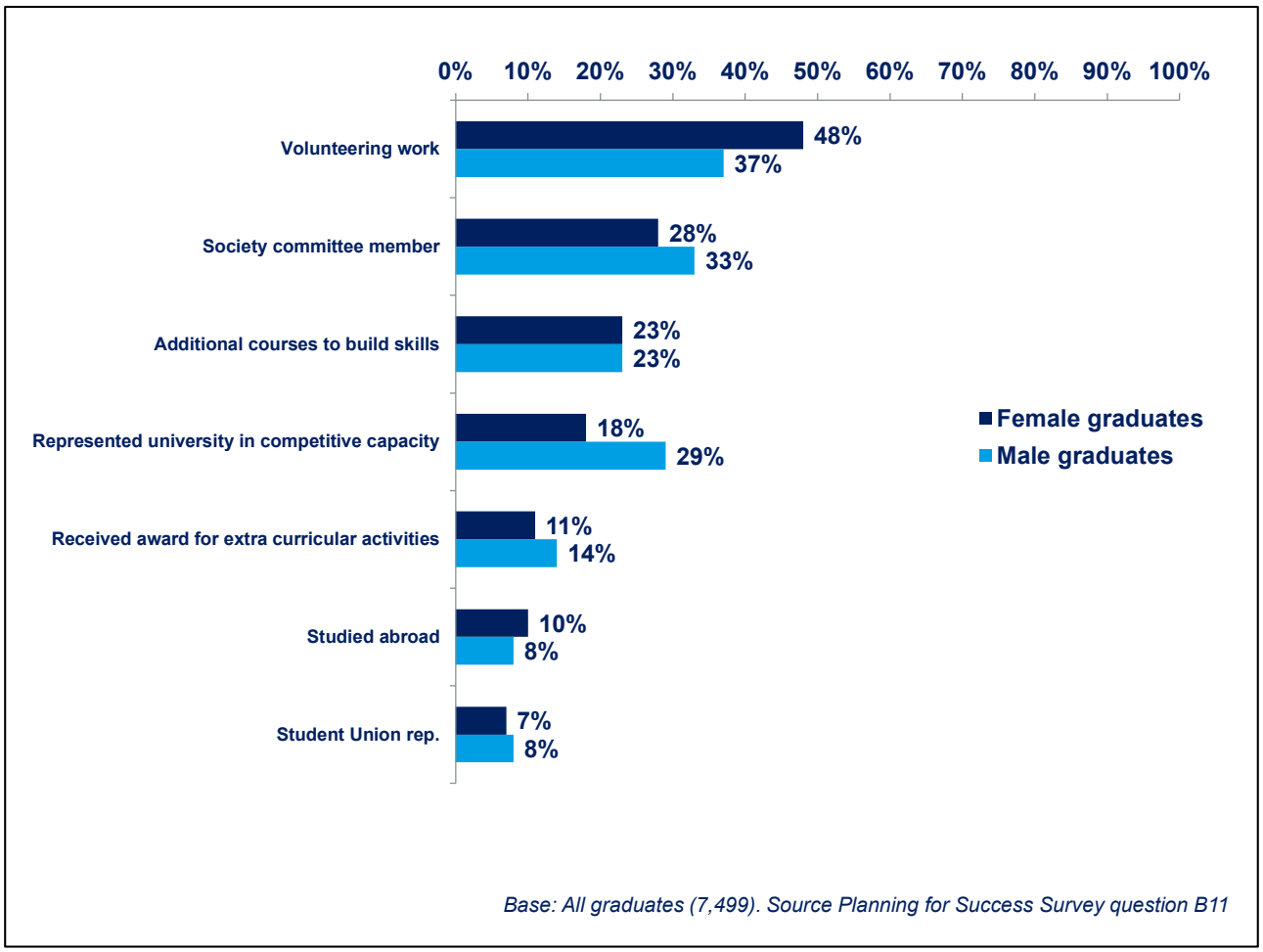
Looking specifically at the individual activities listed, the same group of graduates outlined above (those who attended TRAC Group A or B universities, used their careers services and achieved higher degree classifications) were those most likely in general to undertake each individual activity. However there were some marked variations when analysed by gender and subject area.

Differences by gender and subject area

Overall female and male graduates were equally likely to have undertaken at least one CV building activity, but the nature of this engagement varies as shown in Figure 6.2. Almost half of female graduates (48 per cent) had done voluntary or charity work compared to just over a third of males (37 per cent). This links with women being more likely to have done unpaid work to gain career related experience as reported in Chapter 5 (Work experience) with more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of those who undertook unpaid work to gain career related experience having also volunteered.

Male graduates were more likely to have been society committee members, represented their university in a competitive capacity or received an award for extracurricular activities than female, so were more likely on the whole to have engaged with the structured opportunities to demonstrate leadership or team work provided by university life.

Figure 6.2: Level of CV building activities engaged in by gender



Graduates of the Arts, Biological and Veterinary Sciences and Medicine and Dentistry were more likely to have engaged in CV building activity (81 per cent, 77 per cent and 75 per cent respectively did at least one activity). However there are marked differences in the nature of activities undertaken as shown in Table 6.1.

Graduates of several subject areas were more likely to have been society committee members including Engineering & Architecture, Medicine and Dentistry and the Arts whereas awards for extracurricular activities were more likely to be achieved by just Arts graduates. These graduates (who include those who studied foreign languages) were also more than twice as likely to have studied abroad (25 per cent compared to nine per cent of all graduates).

Table 6.1: Level of selected CV building activities engaged in by broad JACS subject areas

	Engagement in CV building activities by broad JACS subject areas								
	All graduates	Arts	Biological& Vet. Sciences	Medicine& Dentistry	Engineering & Architecture	Social Studies & Communications	Business, Law & Education	Maths & Physical Sciences	Creative Arts & Design
Base	***7,499***	*1,003*	*1,001*	*692*	*526*	*1,126*	*1,493*	*889*	*740*
Any CV building activity	**70%**	**81%**	**77%**	**75%**	**72%**	**70%**	**66%**	**66%**	**56%**
Volunteering work	**44%**	55%	53%	47%	35%	45%	39%	36%	35%
Society committee member	**30%**	40%	27%	40%	44%	30%	24%	31%	17%
Additional courses to build skills	**23%**	25%	22%	22%	25%	25%	25%	23%	17%
Represented university in competitive capacity	**23%**	20%	30%	26%	35%	22%	20%	23%	11%
Received award for extra-curricular activities	**12%**	14%	13%	12%	13%	13%	10%	12%	10%
Studied abroad	**9%**	25%	4%	9%	6%	7%	10%	4%	3%
Student Union representative	**7%**	6%	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%	5%	8%

Note: Significant differences from the all-graduate average are highlighted in red (significantly higher than average) and orange (significantly lower).

Building a CV – combining a range of activities and work experience

Overall 70 per cent of graduates had undertaken at least one CV building activity as discussed above. It was common for graduates who sought to improve their employability by undertaking these activities to have done more than one of those listed with 42 per cent of all graduates having undertaken at least two activities (with 9 per cent having done four or more activities). Amongst those who had done at least one activity, the average number of activities undertaken was 2.1.

Volunteering, as the most common activity, was the most frequently combined with other CV building activities, almost one in five graduates (18 per cent) had both volunteered and been a society committee member. Around one in eight graduates had volunteered and undertaken additional courses (13 per cent) or represented their university in a competitive capacity (12 per cent). Other combinations were less common although a similar proportion (13 per cent) had been both been a society committee member and represented their university in a competitive capacity.

Those at TRAC Group A or B universities, those studying a course in the areas of Engineering and Architecture or the Arts were particularly likely to take on a greater number of CV building activities (average 2.3 or 2.4).

Those who had completed work experience were more likely to have also undertaken at least one of the other CV building activities asked about in the study (74 per cent had done at least one) than those who had not completed work experience (only 59 per cent had done at least one). This was particularly the case amongst those who had done unpaid work to gain career related experience (82 per cent had done at least one CV building activity) and it may well of course be that the unpaid work experience and the volunteering / charity work was the same role.

However those who had done an internship or a non-compulsory placement as part of their course were also especially likely to have engaged in other CV building activities, with around 80 per cent of each group having done so. As outlined in Chapter 5 (Work experience), those who undertook these forms of work experience were in general those who were more proactive about building their career and employability with further evidence of this approach here. Those who did internships were also particularly likely to have done a high number of different CV building activities (average of 2.5). Although internships were relatively rare they were the form of work experience most likely to see graduates going on to jobs with their placement provider and to professional or managerial level employment in general. Whilst the internship itself may be a key to success, these other CV building activities may also have been a contributing factor in securing a professional or managerial role or helped them get onto the internship.

Overall half of graduates (55 per cent) did work experience as well as other CV building activities. A further fifth (19 per cent) did not do work experience but did do other CV building activities while 16 per cent did work experience only. Only just over one in ten (11 per cent) did neither work experience nor other CV building activity, highlighting the level of effort put in by many to enrich their CV beyond their academic achievements.

Engagement with CV building by outcome groups

Those who were engaged in further study at the Planning for Success Survey point were the most likely to have undertaken CV building activities whilst they were at university or in the six months afterwards. Overall, more than three quarters of those whose main activity was study (78 per cent) had undertaken at least one CV building activity during or just after their initial undergraduate degree.

Looking at those who had secured employment by the Planning for Success Survey point, the incidence of CV building activities was higher amongst those who had gone on to full and part-time professional or managerial roles (71 per cent and 74 per cent respectively compared to 65 per cent of those in non-professional roles). Indeed those who were unemployed were as likely to have engaged in CV building activities as those who had moved into non-professional employment (69 per cent compared to 65 per cent).

Table 6.2: Proportion of graduates in each main activity outcome group who engaged in CV building activities (other than work experience)

	All grads	Full-time professional or managerial emp.	Part-time professional or managerial emp.	Non-professional emp.	Further study	Unemployment
Base	7,499	4,600	195	1,471	786	168
Any CV building activity	**70%**	**71%**	**74%**	**65%**	**78%**	**69%**
Volunteering work	**44%**	42%	58%	40%	51%	45%
Society committee member	**30%**	32%	24%	23%	39%	26%
Additional courses to build skills	**23%**	23%	23%	21%	26%	27%
Represented university in competitive capacity	**23%**	25%	20%	18%	23%	20%
Received award for extra-curricular activities	**12%**	13%	10%	10%	14%	11%
Studied abroad	**9%**	9%	7%	7%	11%	12%
Student Union representative	**7%**	7%	6%	6%	9%	3%

Looking at individual activities, those whose main activity was full-time professional or managerial employment by the Planning for Success Survey stage were no more likely than those who were unemployed to have done volunteering work or additional courses but they were more likely to have been society committee members, have represented their university in a competitive capacity or have received an award for extracurricular activities. It may be that these specific activities were useful in gaining employment, or that the 'type' of students who had undertaken these activities were particularly proactive or motivated in seeking employment.

Volunteering work was especially likely to have been undertaken by those whose main activity was part-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage, with some 58 per cent reporting they had done volunteering compared to only 42 per cent of those whose main activity was a full-time professional or managerial role. This follows the findings in Chapter 5 (Work experience) that those who moved into part-time professional or managerial roles were particularly likely to have done unpaid work experience to gain career related experience (51 per cent had done so and for most that unpaid work experience and this voluntary work may be one and the same activity). As with their work experience the uptake here of voluntary work by those in part-time employment may indicate that they had time to commit to unpaid work alongside other paid part-time work, or perhaps that unpaid experience is more likely in sectors where funding for full-time roles is limited (and competition therefore stiff), which could require graduates to undertake a pattern of voluntary work followed by part-time roles.

Differences in the level of engagement with CV building activities by the Planning for Success Survey point outcome group broadly mirror those from the DLHE survey point, with those in study six months after graduation most likely to have undertaken CV building activities (80 per cent had done so compared to 68 per cent of those in employment and 64 per cent of those unemployed).

As reported above those who achieved higher degree classifications, went to TRAC Group A or B universities and those who made more use of their university careers service were more likely to have undertaken CV building activities. Their outcomes at the Planning for Success Survey point are likely to be a combination of a strong qualification alongside evidence of proactive choices to build experience and skills made by these graduates whilst at university and the six months following.

This chapter showed that the majority of graduates participated in at least one CV building activity either while at university or in the six months after and that this was more common among those who had also participated in work experience. Until now the report has focussed on graduate's career planning activities before applying for jobs, so to conclude that journey into employment the next chapter will explore how graduates actually went about applying for jobs.

Chapter 7 Approach to job applications

Chapter Summary

The majority of graduates (62 per cent) had *at least* a good idea about the types of job or career they wanted to pursue at the point of leaving university, significantly greater than the proportion stating this at the point of entering university. A third of graduates reported greater clarity with regard to their career plan compared to when they entered university. Those with the clearest career plans upon leaving university ultimately ended up in more positive outcomes (professional or managerial employment and further study) by the Planning for Success Survey point.

Well over half (57 per cent) of graduates started making job applications while still at university, but more than half also made the majority of applications in the six months following graduation. Only 14 per cent of graduates had not made any job applications within six months of leaving university, with these graduates commonly citing a desire to pursue further study as their reason for not doing so.

There was some evidence of a targeted approach to making job applications; the modal number of job applications made was between one and five and almost two-thirds of graduates (64 per cent) applied exclusively or mainly self-defined *graduate level* positions. Those in full-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey point were seen to be more focussed and streamlined in their approach to job applications. They were more likely than others to have *started* applications prior to their final year, to have done *most* of their applications while still at university, and to have mainly focused job applications on *graduate level* roles.

When applying for jobs, graduates were most likely to place an importance on job satisfaction and an opportunity for career development.

In previous chapters we have looked at what the Planning for Success Survey cohort of 2011-12 graduates were doing two and a half years after graduating, and at the various career development activities they undertook to help them reach these outcomes. This chapter adds further detail on graduate pathways and initially outlines the extent to which graduates came out of university with a plan for their career in place. It then goes on to look at the number and nature of job applications that graduates made.

Extent to which graduates had a career plan on leaving university

The majority of graduates had *at least* a good idea about the types of job or careers they wanted to pursue on leaving university (62 per cent), with three in ten stating they knew *exactly* what they wanted to do (28 per cent).

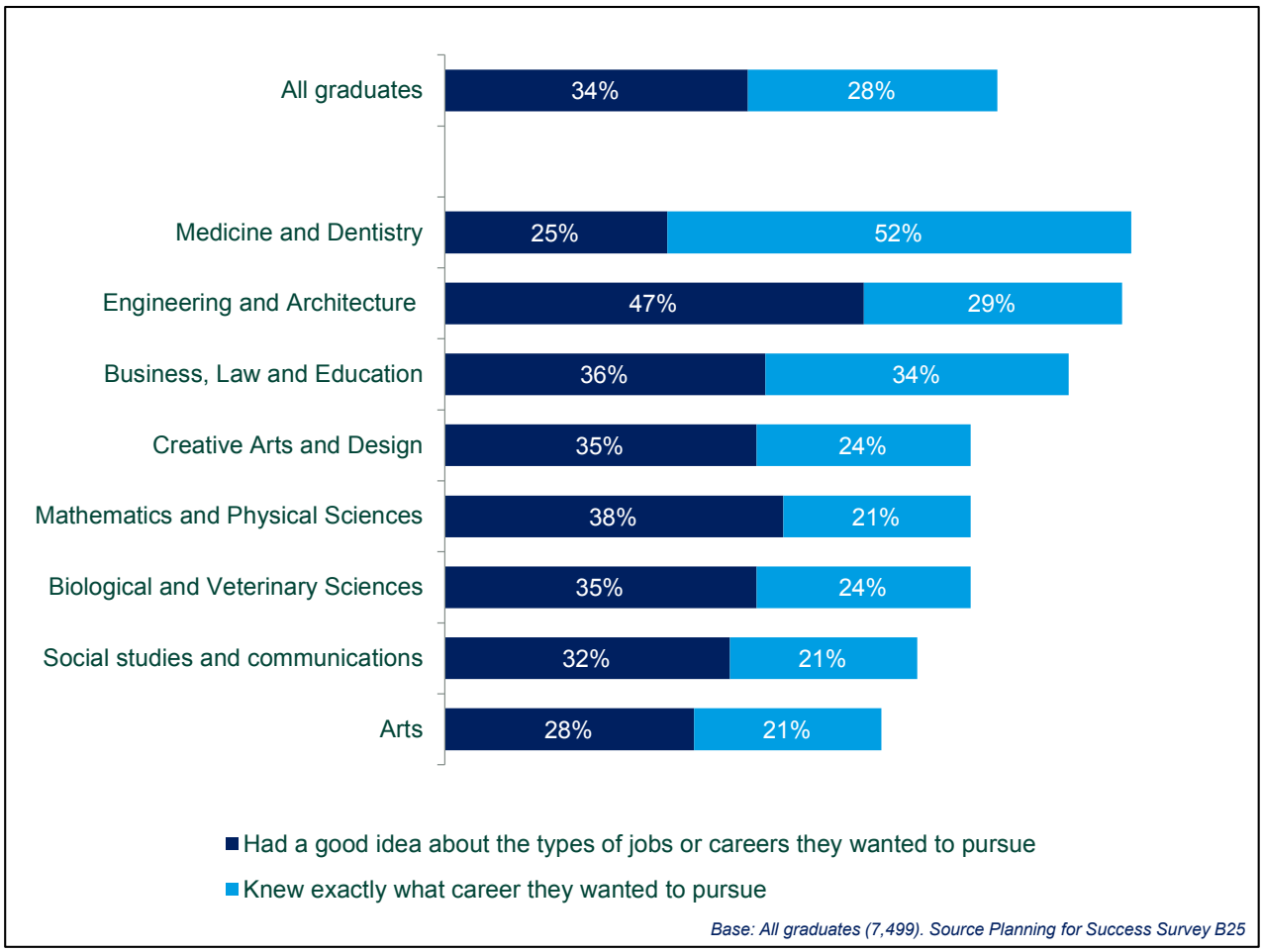
There were some differences between male and female graduates in terms of career planning. Although a similar proportion of males and females had *at least* a good idea of what career they wanted to do at the point of leaving university (61 per cent vs. 62 per cent, respectively), females were more likely to state that they knew *exactly* what they wanted to do (31 per cent vs. 24 per cent of males). This echoes findings from earlier in the report when female graduates were more likely to have known exactly what they wanted to do when applying to university.

Likewise graduates from TRAC Group F institutions, who were more likely to know exactly what they wanted to do career-wise when applying to university, were still more likely than average to state that they knew *exactly* what they wanted to do (36 per cent vs. 28 per cent) upon completing their undergraduate degree.

Clarity of career plan was also strongly correlated to degree class awarded; those achieving a Third were twice as likely as those who were awarded a First to have **no idea** about the type of career they wanted to pursue (17 per cent and nine per cent respectively).

Some degree courses are more clearly vocational in nature and reflecting this there were some quite marked differences in the clarity of career planning between graduates from subjects such as Medicine, Engineering and Architecture where career paths may be more structured compared to those who completed degrees in the Arts or Social Sciences (as shown in Figure 7.1) with less defined career paths.

Figure 7.1: Extent of career plan on leaving university by subject area



Graduates who had undertaken work experience were also among those who had clearer career plans upon leaving university. Of all those who did some form of work experience, almost seven in ten (68 per cent) either had a good idea or knew exactly what job or career they wanted to do after completing their undergraduate degree, compared to 45 per cent of those who did not participate in any form of work experience.

Table 7.1 shows the proportion of graduates undertaking specific types of work experience that had at least a good idea of what career they wanted to pursue upon completing their undergraduate degree. The clearest career plans were held by those who had participated in a placement as part of their course (76 per cent) and as reported in Chapter 5 were also more likely to have reported an outcome of employment at the Planning for Success survey stage than other graduates who had undertaken other forms of work experience.

The value of internships in terms of cementing career plans was variable; those who had completed a vacation internship (completed during university holidays, typically over the summer) were much more certain about their career plans than those who had done a graduate internship (72 per cent and 64 per cent respectively).

Table 7.1 Clarity of career plan upon completing undergraduate degree by profile of work experience

Clarity of career plan upon completing undergraduate degree by profile of work experience		
	Base	*% who had at least a good idea of what career they wanted to pursue*
Any type of work experience	***5,556***	**68%**
Placement as part of course (an industrial or sandwich year placement or shorter structured work placements)	*2,157*	76%
Vacation internship	*1,410*	72%
Shorter structured non-compulsory work placements	*1,969*	71%
Unpaid work to gain useful career related experience	*2,706*	68%
Paid work to gain useful career related experience	*2,339*	66%
Graduate internship	*628*	64%
Paid work (for reasons not related to gaining useful career related experience)	*5,517*	61%

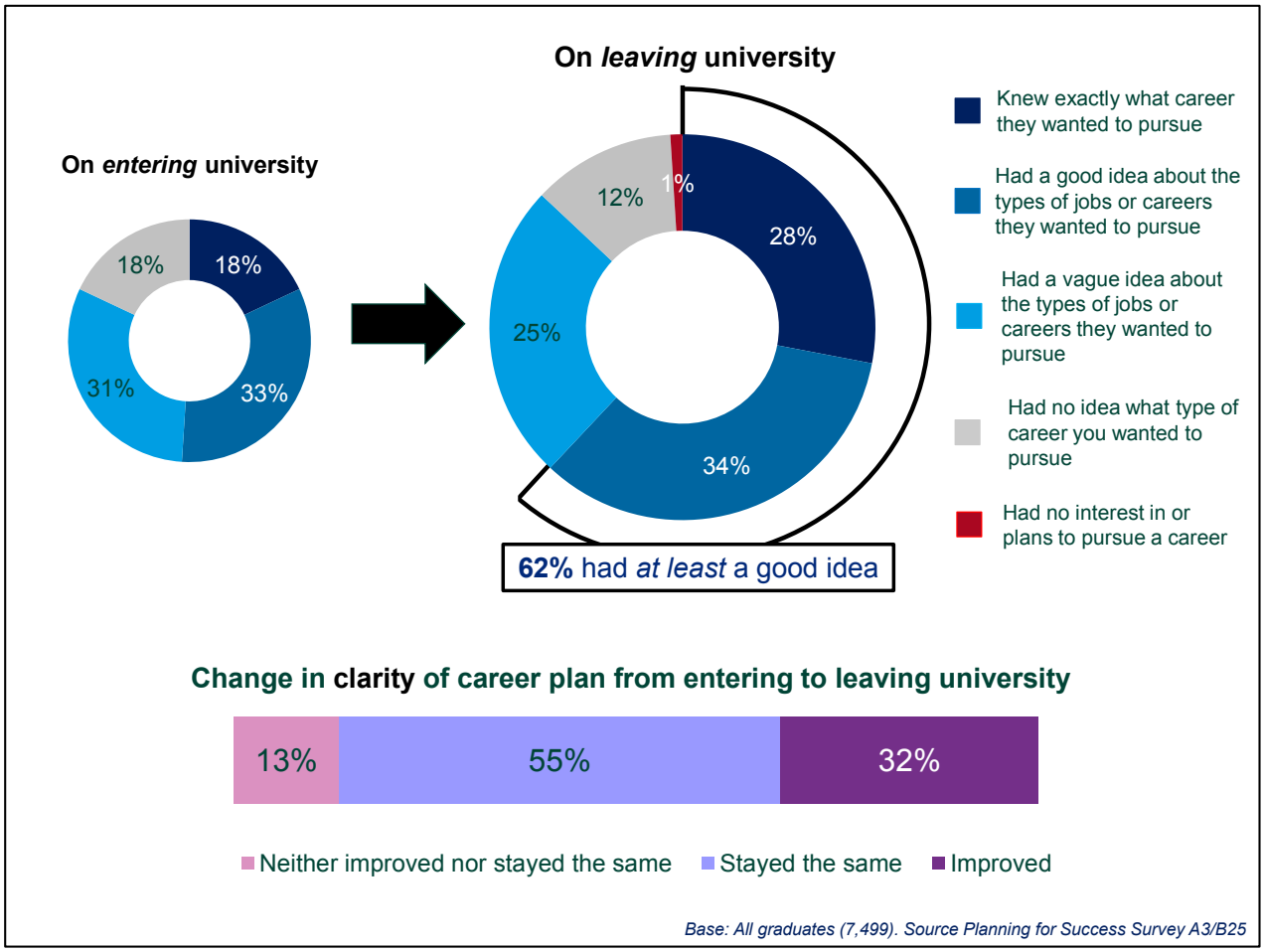
Although paid work separate to gaining useful career related experience was most commonly undertaken by graduates (73 per cent of all graduates either while at university or in the six months after), Table 7.1 shows that those who undertook paid work were least likely to have at least a good idea of what career they wanted to pursue.

Clarity of a graduate's career plan upon completing university varied according to outcome group. Graduates who were unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage were the least likely to have had *at least* a good idea when they left university of what career they wanted to pursue (44 per cent), shortly followed by those in non-professional employment (47 per cent). Graduates in further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage were much more likely to have had *at least* a good idea of what career they wanted to pursue than both these sub-groups, but less likely than those in professional or managerial employment (63 per cent vs. 67 per cent, respectively).

As graduates were asked the extent to which they had a career plan in place both when applying to university and upon completion of their undergraduate degree, it is possible to track how their career planning had evolved during their time at university.

The survey findings shows some progression in students' career planning from the time they entered university to the time they left and this is shown in Figure 7.2. Overall, a third of graduates (32 per cent) had a clearer career plan on leaving university than they did on entering, while more than half did not see any change (55 per cent).

Figure 7.2: Changes in extent of career plan from entering university and upon leaving university



Greatest clarity came to those who were previously less sure about what they wanted to be doing in the longer term.

Graduates who undertook work experience were also among those more likely to have consolidated their career plan while at university (34 per cent vs. 28 per cent who did not) and was particularly marked among those who completed a vacation internship (39 per cent).

Timing of job applications

Figure 7.3 summarises when graduates ***started*** to make applications to jobs that were intended to start after university. The vast majority had started to apply while at university or within six months of completing their undergraduate degree, with only one in seven stating this was not the case (14 per cent).

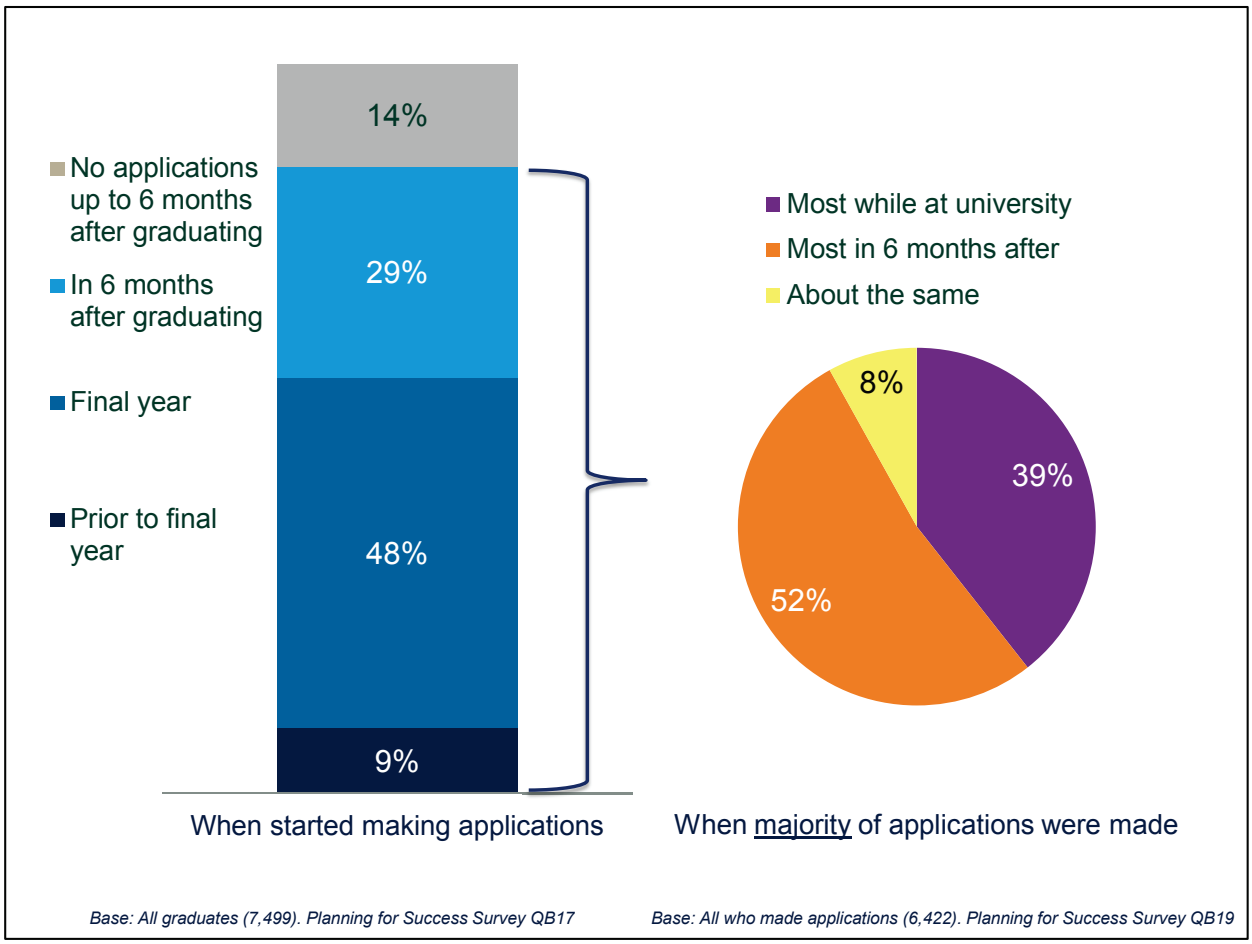
Over half (57 per cent) of all graduates had started to make applications while at university, typically in their final year (48 per cent) and a much smaller proportion (nine per cent) prior to this.

Figure 7.3 also shows that of those graduates who started making applications within six months of completing university, just over half (52 per cent) stated that they had actually **made** the majority of their applications in the six months after university. Around two in five said most were made while at university. Only 8 per cent felt that they made roughly the same amount of applications while at university and in the six months following.

Predictably, how clear graduates were about their career plan had a bearing on when they started to submit job applications. The majority of graduates who had at least a good idea about the job or career they wanted to be doing *when applying* to university were more likely to have started making applications sooner – more than three-fifths (62 per cent) - while at university. The same proportion of those graduates who had at least a good idea about the job or career they wanted to be doing *upon completing* university also started making applications while at university.

Conversely those who had no idea about what they wanted to do when leaving university started to apply later: approaching half (45 per cent) did so specifically in the six months after leaving. Although they were relatively late in starting, however, this did not translate ultimately to inaction: this group were no more likely to have not made any applications at all in the period spanning to the six months after they finished university.

Figure 7.3 Timing of job applications

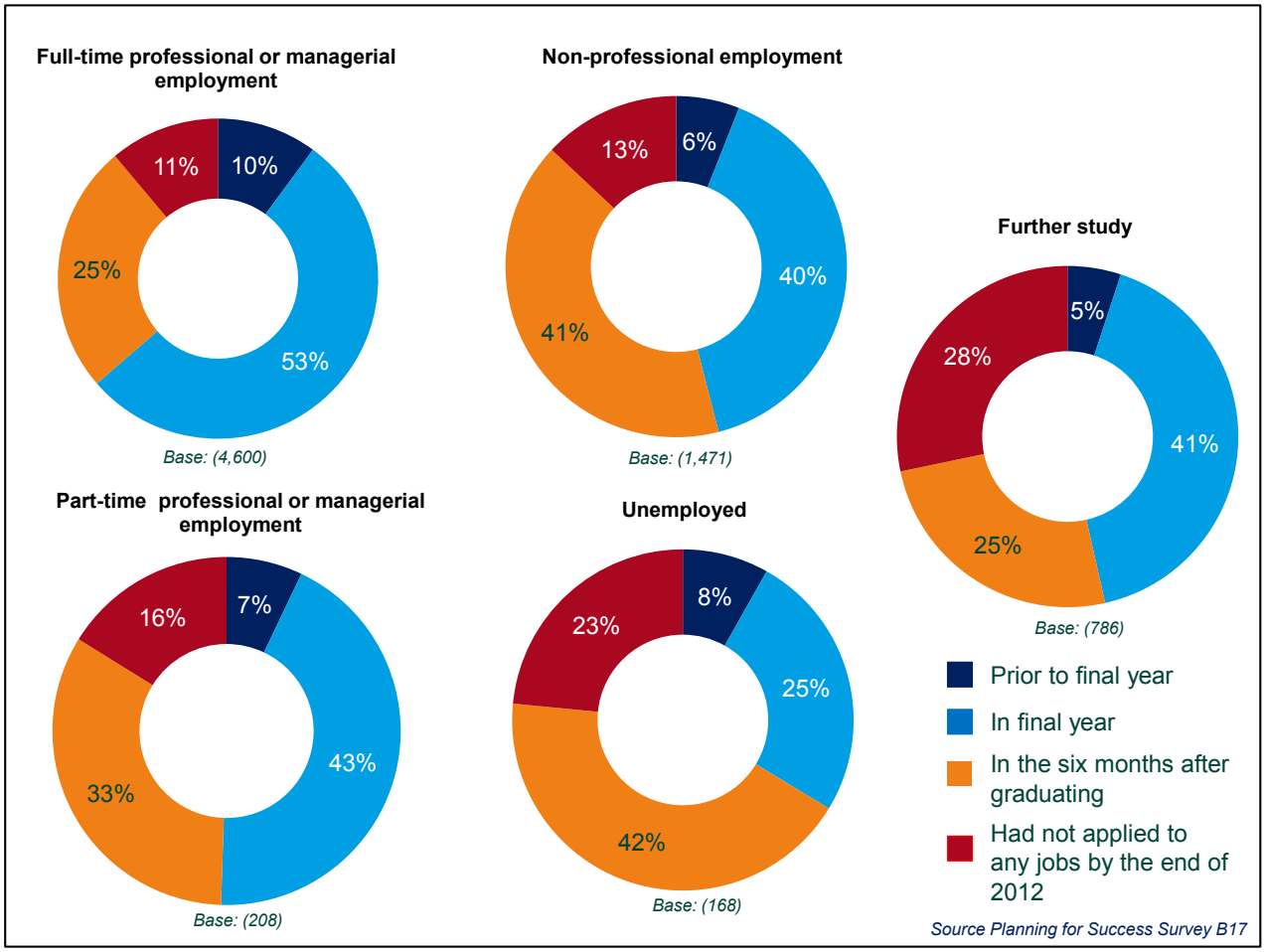


Linked to this there was also some variation in when graduates started to apply for jobs according to their main outcome at the Planning for Success Survey stage Those in unemployment who were generally less clear about their career plan upon completion of their studies were more likely to start making applications later (42 per cent started applications in the six months after university compared to 29 per cent overall) and almost one quarter (23 per cent) had not made any applications within six months of finishing university (compared to 14 per cent of all graduates).

In comparison, those in full-time professional or managerial employment at the Planning for Success Survey point were less likely than all other outcome groups to have only *started* applying for jobs on graduating, or to have not applied to any jobs within six months of leaving university (see Figure 7.4).

Furthermore, these graduates were more likely than those in non-professional roles or unemployment at the Planning for Success Survey stage to have *started* applications prior to their final year, and to state that they made *most* of their applications while at university (46 per cent vs. 22 per cent for both those in non-professional employment and unemployment). Ultimately this means that graduates who started applying to jobs while they were still at university were more likely to report full-time professional or managerial employment as their main outcome at the Planning for Success Survey stage than those who started the application process later (67 per cent compared to 53 per cent who started in the six months after finishing university and 49 per cent of those who hadn't made any applications within six months of finishing).

Figure 7.4: When graduates started making job applications by outcome at the Planning for Success Survey stage



As might be expected those graduates who went on to report further study as their main activity at the Planning for Success Survey point were less involved in making job applications than all other outcome groups. Approaching three in ten (28 per cent) of those who were in further study had not made any job applications within six months of completing their undergraduate degree. However this doesn't necessarily mean that they were less likely to have made applications whilst at university, just that they were less likely *than some other groups* to have made applications in the six months after graduating (albeit as likely to have done so as those in full-time professional or managerial

employment at the Planning for Success Study point). This may suggest that a graduate's decision to enter into further study might have been determined to some extent by their relative success in applying to jobs while at university; those unsuccessful in their job applications early on may have decided to take alternative route i.e. further study at the point of graduating from their undergraduate degree.

Reasons for not making job applications

Overall, 14 per cent of all graduates had not made any job applications either while at university or in the six months after. This group were asked why this was the case.

As reported in the previous section, those who were in further study at the Planning for Success Survey point were twice as likely to have not made any job applications in this timeframe and correspondingly, the most common reason given for not making job applications was because graduates planned to pursue the route of further study rather than enter the labour market. This reason was cited by two-thirds of graduates (66 per cent) who had not applied for any jobs and, as shown in Figure 7.5, was substantially more common than any other reason.

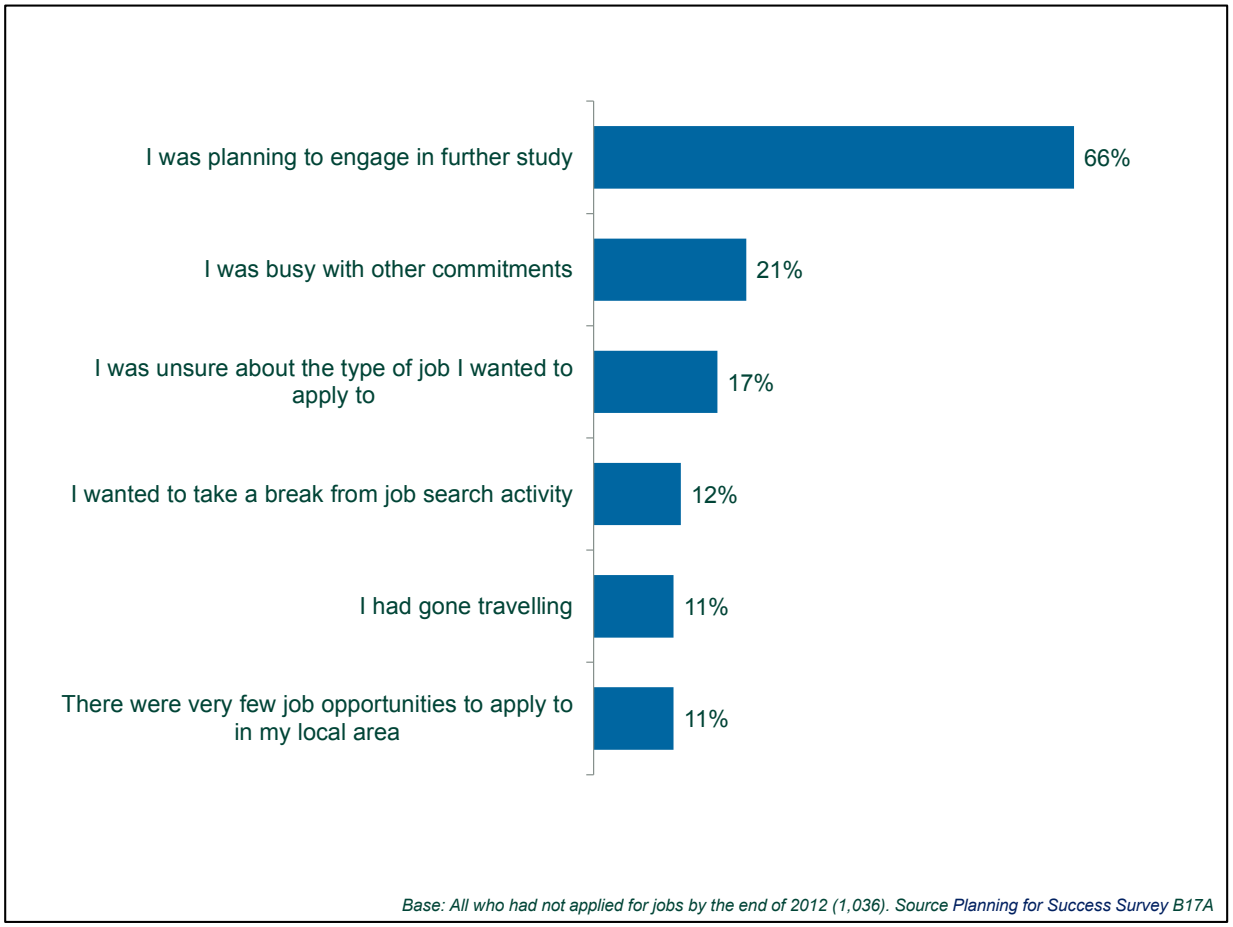


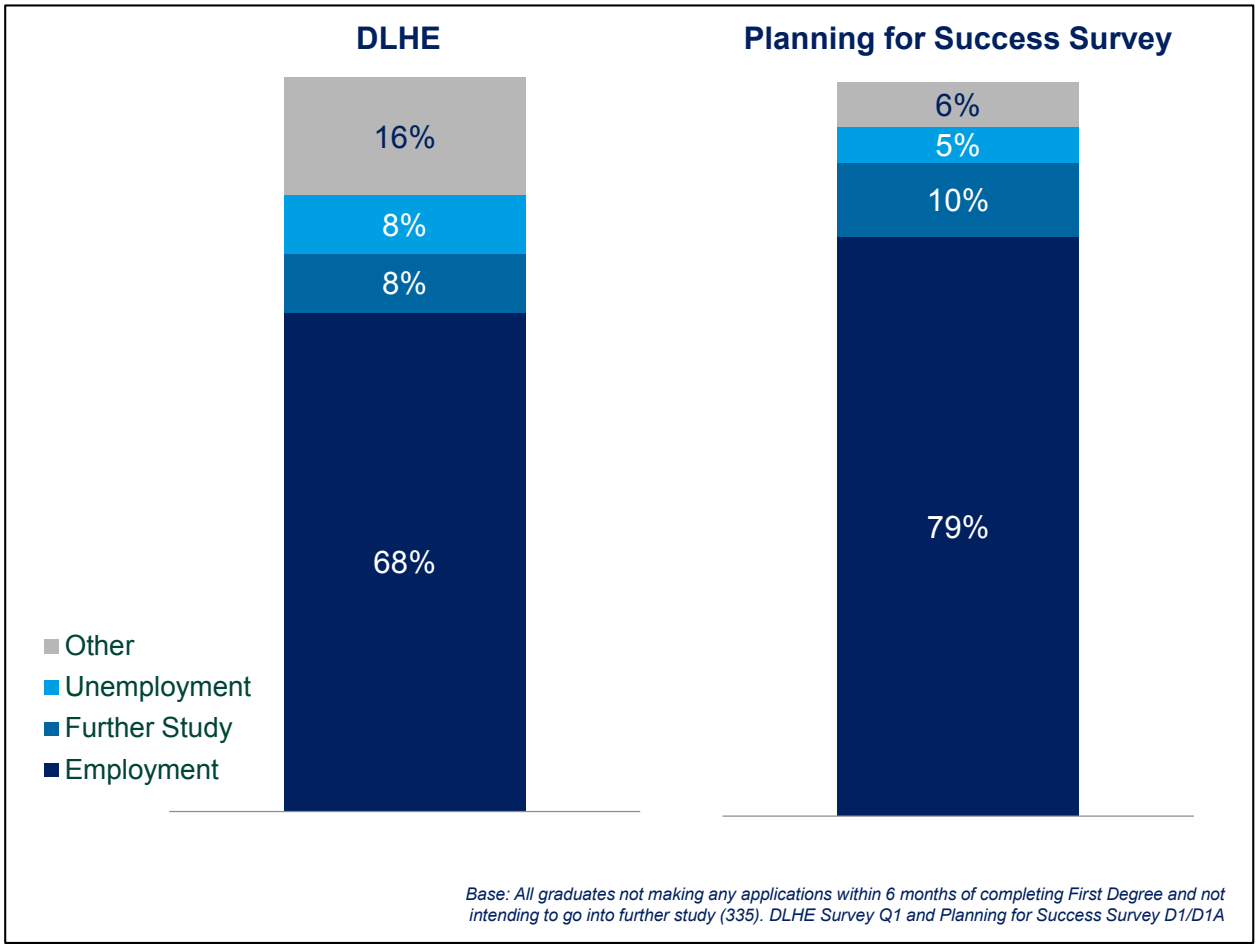
Figure 7.5: Reasons for not making job applications

The vast majority of graduates who cited this reason were indeed in further study at DLHE six months after graduation (96 per cent), while four in five were in further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage (83 per cent).

Graduates in non-professional employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage were significantly more likely than all other sub-groups to state that they did not make applications due to a lack of clarity about what type of job they wanted to apply to (35 per cent vs. 17 per cent average). These individuals were also more likely than those in full-time professional or managerial employment and further study to say that they were 'Busy with other commitments', 'Wanted to take a break from job search activity' and 'had few job opportunities in their local area'.

Figure 7.6 shows the outcomes at both the DLHE and the Planning for Success Survey points for the five per cent of graduates who had not made any job applications within six months of completing their undergraduate degree and who were not intending to go into further study.

Figure 7.6: Outcomes of those who had not applied for jobs and who were not intending to go into further study



Despite not having made any applications, the majority (68 per cent) reported employment as their main outcome at DLHE. One in ten (10 per cent) had taken time out in order to

travel and a slightly lower proportion (eight per cent) were either unemployed or in further study even though they had not explicitly planned to undertake further study.

By the Planning for Success Survey point the proportion of these graduates in employment had increased from 68 per cent to 79 per cent, while one in ten (10 per cent) had actually entered into further study despite this not being their original intention. Half this proportion again (5 per cent), were unemployed, down slightly from DLHE.

Number of job applications and resulting offers of employment

Graduates who had made any job applications within six months of graduating from their undergraduate degree were asked for more detail on the number of applications made, the number of these resulting in an interview or assessment centre and the number of applications submitted from which they received a job offer.

Table 7.2 overleaf summarises this information by each of the key outcome groups and shows that overall the modal number of job applications made was fewer than 5; the modal number of job applications resulting in an interview assessment or interview was 1-2 and the modal number of applications resulting in a job offer was one. The table also shows some key variations by outcome group:

- Individuals who entered into full-time professional or managerial employment and further study generally made fewer applications compared to those who entered into part-time professional or managerial employment or non-professional employment;

- In comparison, graduates who were in non-professional employment or were unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey point were much more likely to have submitted at least 50 applications;

- There was relatively little variation in terms of the number of job applications that resulted in an interview or assessment centre other than those who were in further study were particularly likely to receive 1-2 invitations to an interview or assessment centre. Those who were unemployed were more than twice as likely than average to have received no interviews or assessments as a result of the job applications they made;

- Those in non-professional employment at the Planning for Success Survey point were more likely than those in professional or managerial occupations to have received no job offers as a result of the job applications made.

Table 7.2 Number of job applications made, resulting interviews and job offers by key outcome group

Number of job applications made, resulting interviews and job offers by key outcome group						
	All who made applications within 6 months of leaving university	Full-time professional or managerial employment	Part-time professional or managerial employment	Non-professional employment	Further study	Unemployment
Base	6,422	4,070	160	1,274	561	130
Job applications made (B18)						
Fewer than 5	**30%**	32%*	24%	22%*	38%*	27%
5-9	**17%**	17%	18%	15%	21%*	7%
10-19	**20%**	19%	19%	22%	19%	21%
20-29	**11%**	11%	11%	12%	7%	11%
30-49	**7%**	8%	9%	7%	5%	8%
50+	**13%**	11%*	15%	18%*	9%	19%*
Number of job applications resulting in resulted in an interview or assessment centre (B23)						
0	**6%**	5%*	9%	8%*	5%	14%*
1-2	**38%**	38%	41%	36%*	46%*	51%*
3-4	**32%**	32%	28%	34%	29%	16%*
5-9	**16%**	18%*	10%*	15%	14%	10%
10-19	**5%**	4%	9%*	5%	4%	6%
20+	**1%**	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Number of many job offers received as a result of the job applications made (B24)						
0	**14%**	11%*	24%*	21%*	13%	40%*
1	**44%**	46%*	40%	40%*	41%	34%*
2	**24%**	25%*	18%	23%	25%	14%*
3	**10%**	10%	8%	9%	11%	7%
4	**4%**	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%
5	**2%**	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%
More than 5	**1%**	1%	1%	2%	2%	-%

**indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level*

There were a few other differences in terms of the **number of job applications** made by graduate groups and these tended to link back to graduates' main outcomes. Those who were more likely to **make fewer than five applications** included:

- Graduates from TRAC Group A universities (and those more likely to be in full-time professional or managerial roles and further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage) were more likely to have made fewer than five applications (38 per cent compared to 30 per cent overall);

- Linked to this again, graduates who achieved a first-class degree (36 per cent);
- Those who did not use their university career service (36 per cent);
- Graduates who had at least a good idea about what they wanted to do career wise upon leaving university (34 per cent);
- Female graduates (31 per cent compared to 29 per cent of male graduates).

There was also some variation according to subject studied with graduates of creative arts and design subjects (18 per cent) and business, law and education (16 per cent) more likely to have applied for at least 50 jobs (compared to 13 per cent overall). There was little variation in terms of the number of applications made according to sector graduates ended up working in.

In terms of the number of job offers received as a result of job applications made, there were a few groups who were **more likely to have received no job offers**. Evidence of work experience was of particular importance as those who did not participate in any form work were almost twice as likely not to have received a job offer compared to those who had (21 per cent vs. 12 per cent). Other groups more likely to have not received a job offer were:

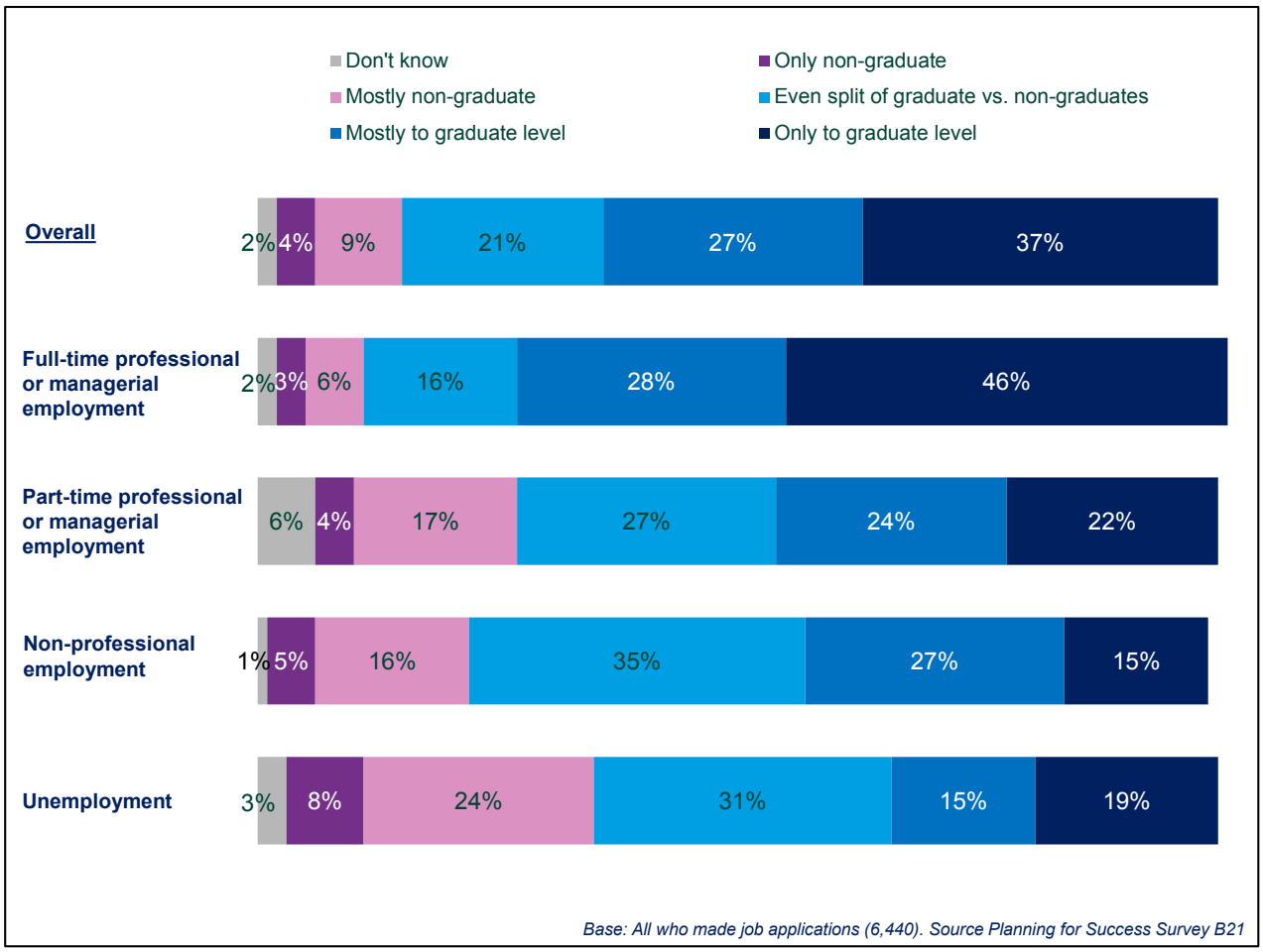
- Those who were awarded a 2:2 Degree classification (19 per cent compared to 14 per cent overall);
- Male graduates (16 per cent compared to 13 per cent of female graduates) who were also slightly more likely to be unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage.

Applications to *graduate level* jobs

Around two-thirds of graduates who made job applications within six months of graduating applied for mostly *graduate level* roles[21] (64 per cent applied to mostly / only *graduate level* roles) see Figure 7.7. This proportion rose among those who were in full-time professional or managerial level employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage (74 per cent). Graduates who were unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage were significantly more likely than all others to have applied for a majority of non-professional level roles.

[21] Graduates were asked about the level of jobs they had applied for and assessed at an individual level whether they would categorise the roles as at a *graduate level*. A distinction is made in the report between *graduate level jobs*; where graduates assessed themselves the level of the jobs they applied for; and 'professional or managerial' roles which have been classified (by IFF) using graduates' job title and job duties and coding against the SOC classification. All roles falling into the top 3 SOC codes are defined as professional or managerial'.

Figure 7.7: Extent to which applications were for *graduate level* jobs



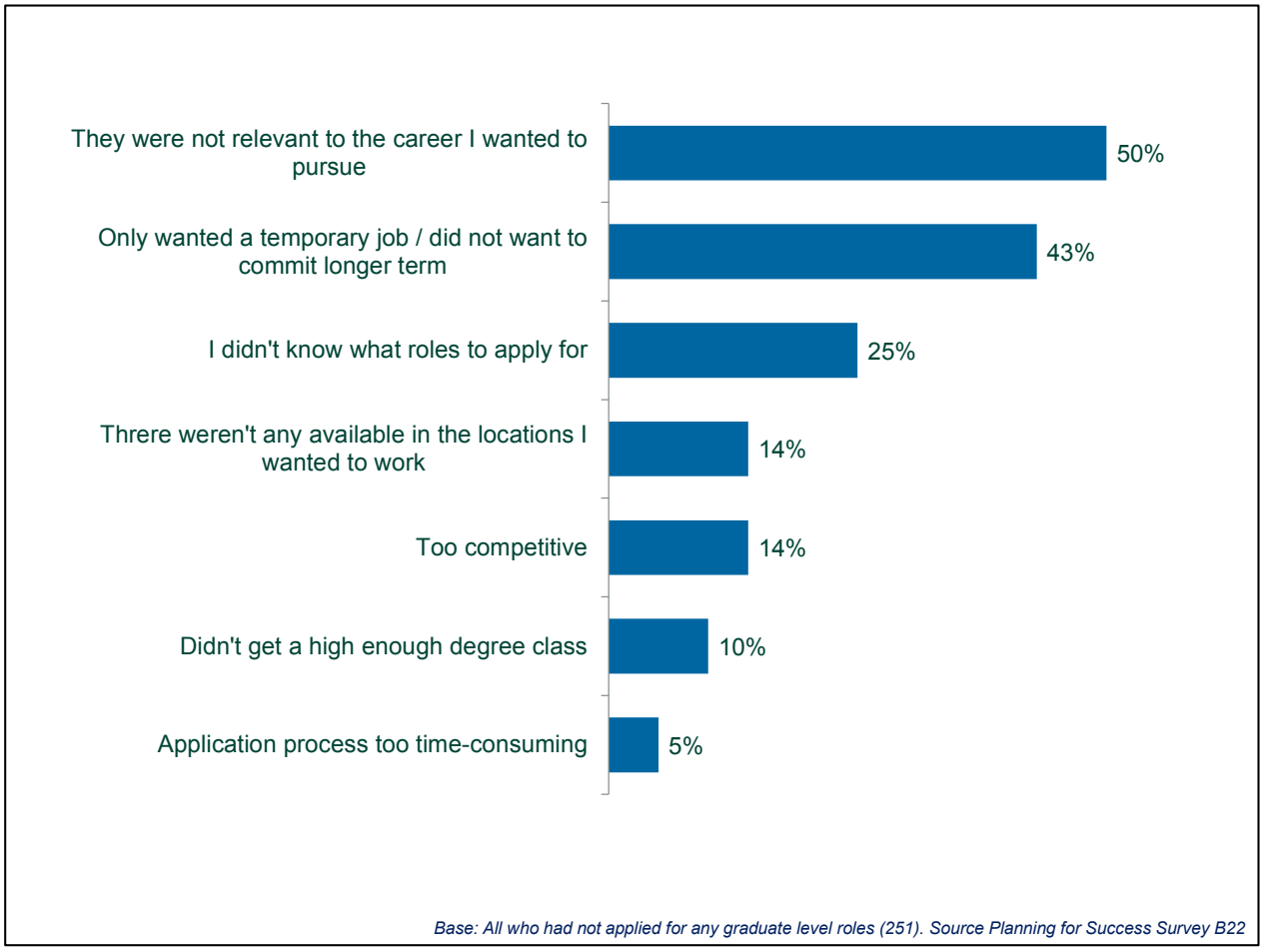
Other sub-groups differences were seen in terms of **only applying to *graduate level* roles** and these included:

- Those from TRAC group A were significantly more likely than average to have *only* applied to *graduate level* roles (57 per cent vs. 37 per cent overall);
- Male graduates (40 per cent vs. 35 per cent of female graduates);
- Graduates who were awarded a first-class degree (50 per cent vs. 37 per cent overall);
- Those who had *at least* a good idea of what they wanted to do on leaving university (46 per cent vs. 37 per cent average);
- Those who had done any type of work experience (41 per cent vs. 24 per cent who had not been involved in any work experience), particularly if a graduate had undertaken a vacation internship (56 per cent).

Reasons for not applying to *graduate level* roles

The survey asked the very small proportion (three per cent) of all graduates who did not apply for any *graduate level* jobs why they did not do so. Most commonly, graduates reported that such roles were not relevant to the career that they wanted to pursue; as shown in Figure 7.8, this was the case for half of these graduates. However, half (50 per cent) of those who did not consider *graduate roles* relevant to the type of career they wanted to pursue were working in professional or managerial positions by the Planning for Success Survey (47 per cent full-time and four per cent part-time). This may suggest that either with time these graduates had changed the scope of the types of jobs they were interested in, or that *graduate roles* which they did not originally consider relevant to their career actually were, even if the majority (70 per cent) of them reported having at least a good idea about what they wanted to be doing upon leaving university.

Figure 7.8: Reasons for not applying to *graduate level* jobs



Just over two-fifths (43 per cent) of graduates who did not apply for *graduates roles* chose not to because they only wanted a temporary role or did not want to commit to a job long term. However, over half (53 per cent) of these graduates considered their main activity by DLHE as full-time employment and roughly the same proportion again (52 per cent) at the Planning for Success Survey point. Just under one-quarter (23 per cent) considered their main activity at DLHE part-time work, and around half this proportion at the Planning

for Success Survey stage (13 per cent). Instead, by the Planning for Success Survey stage, a higher proportion of those who did not apply for *graduate roles* because they only wanted a temporary job were engaged in further study (25 per cent) and may suggest that employment was a stop gap to allow these individuals to save up to be able to afford a period of further study.

One quarter of graduates who did not apply for any *graduate level* jobs were simply not sure what sorts of roles to apply for and by the Planning for Success Survey more than two-fifths (44 per cent) were working in non-professional roles. Just over one in ten (13 per cent) of those who were not sure what sorts of roles to apply for were engaged in full-time study by the Planning for Success Survey while seven per cent were unemployed.

Less than one in seven graduates felt their location, competition from other graduates, or their degree class were barriers to applying for *graduate level* roles[22].

Influential factors when applying to jobs

To understand more about what graduates want from a chosen job and to gauge how graduates' motivations vary according to whether they apply / end up working in professional or managerial roles as opposed to non-professional, those who had made applications within six months of leaving university were asked how important a number of different factors were to them when deciding which jobs to apply for. The results are shown in Figure 7.9.

Overall, graduates were motivated by two main factors when applying for jobs both of which were considered as important as one another:

- **Job satisfaction** (94 per cent of those who made applications within six months of completing their undergraduate degree considered this important – 65 per cent very important and 29 per cent quite important);

- **The opportunity to develop a career** (93 per cent considered this important – 72 per cent very and 21 per cent quite).

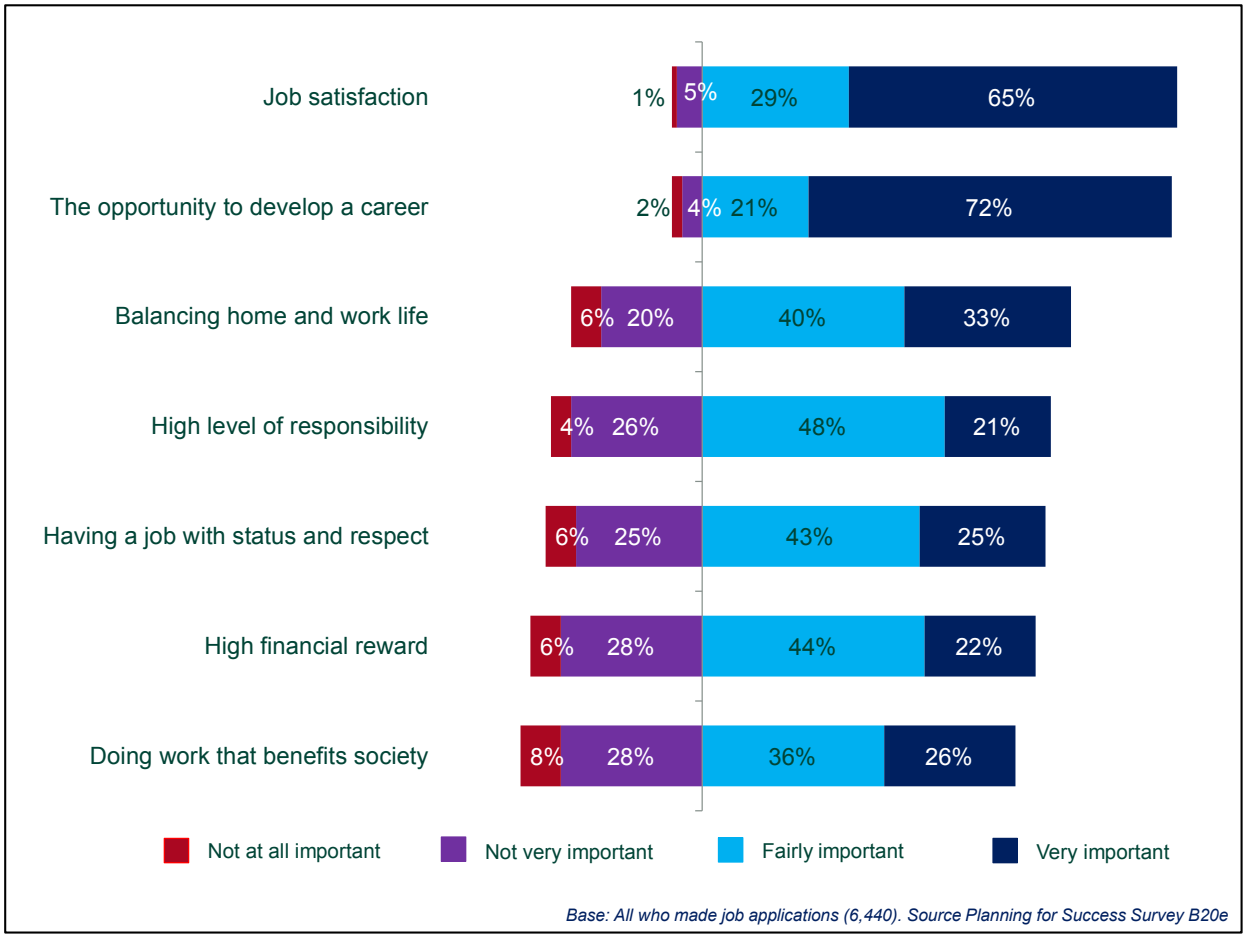
Although both these factors were considered equally important overall, a higher proportion rated the opportunity to develop a career as **very important** compared to job satisfaction (72 per cent and 65 per cent).

Little variation was seen between the other factors in terms of overall influence, but doing work that benefits society was the least likely to have importance placed on it (62 per cent) although this was still reported by a majority of graduates. Obtaining a job with a high level of responsibility and financial reward were the least likely to be thought of as *very* important (21 per cent and 22 per cent).

[22] Due to low bases sizes further analysis by subgroups is not possible.

In terms of variations according to whether individuals **applied** to *graduate level* positions as opposed to non-professional, those who applied to *graduate level* roles were significantly more likely to consider all factors more important that those who applied to non-professional positions. This was also true among those who ended up **working** in professional or managerial and non-professional positions with the exception of balancing home and work life which was considered equally important by both groups.

Figure 7.9: Importance of different factors when applying to jobs



So far the report has covered the different aspects of graduate career planning and detailed graduate outcomes two and a half years after leaving university. The next and final chapter will combine the findings reported thus far and provide greater clarity on the relative importance of different behaviours, characteristics and factors on specific graduate outcomes.

Chapter 8 What determines graduate outcomes?

Chapter Summary

Based on multivariate analysis techniques, this final chapter of the report looks to rank different "predictors" in order of importance or influence in terms of their impact on graduate outcomes. The predictors used can be grouped by broad type; e.g. type of university attended or gender can be categorised as demographic predictors, reasons for going to university or the extent to which graduates knew what job or type or career they wanted to pursue could be grouped under attitudinal predictors, others focussed on the type of work experience undertaken. Grouping predictors in such a way shows that those that were about graduates' attitudes to career planning were most important in determining an outcome of employment or further study at the Planning for Success Survey point and that work experience was slightly less important.

The combination of university TRAC grouping and degree class meant that overall, demographic predictors were most important in determining whether students ended up either in further study or in employment.

Overall the multivariate analysis showed attitudinal factors were most important in determining whether a graduate entered into professional or managerial or non-professional level employment.

Among graduates who entered into professional or managerial employment, those who were more focused or targeted in this direction were the most likely to secure full-time employment. Graduates who had undertaken unpaid work experience were also more likely to secure full-time professional or managerial work. Having undertaken volunteering or charity work also had some (albeit lesser) impact on the likelihood of ensuring that professional or managerial level work was secured on a full-time basis.

Findings in this report have so far been based on bivariate analysis which has allowed us to understand what behaviours, characteristics and factors impact on or influence specific graduate outcomes. This final chapter will go beyond this analysis to explore the **relative** importance or influence of these factors in determining graduates' main outcomes two and a half years after completing their undergraduate degree.

The analysis presented below is based on analysis which has used multivariate techniques, specifically Correlated Components Regression (CCR) analysis, to rank different behaviours, characteristics and factors (predictors) in order of importance or influence in terms of their impact on graduate outcomes (further information on this analysis is in the Technical Annex). The predictors included in the analysis are listed in the table overleaf.

Type	Predictor
Demographic	Socio-Economic Classification
	Gender
	Class of degree
	HEI TRAC Group
Attitudinal	Detail of career plan graduate had when applying to university
	Detail of career plan graduate had on leaving university
	Main reason for going to university
	Main reason for going to studying subject
Work experience	Whether undertook work experience placements as part of course
	Whether undertook shorter structured non-compulsory work placements
	Whether undertook vacation internship
	Whether undertook graduate internship
	Whether undertook paid work to gain useful career related experience
	Whether undertook unpaid work to gain useful career related experience
	Whether undertook paid work whilst at university or in the 6 months after
University careers service	Extent to which graduate used careers service
CV building activities	Whether did additional courses to build skills
	Whether studied abroad
	Whether did any volunteering or charity work
	Whether became a Student Union representative
	Whether represented their university in a competitive capacity
	Whether became a society committee member
	Whether received an official award for extracurricular activities
Approach to making applications	Whether made job applications whilst at university or in the 6 months after
	Whether made applications to further study
	Whether made job applications only to *graduate roles*[23] whilst at university

[23] Graduates were asked about the level of jobs they had applied for and assessed at an individual level whether they would categorise the roles as at a *graduate level*. A distinction is made in the report between *graduate level jobs*; where graduates assessed themselves the level of the jobs they applied for; and 'professional or managerial' roles which have been classified (by IFF) using graduates' job title and job

The statistical outputs from the CCR analysis are included in the technical report.

Each predictor was tested in four successive, separate models which grouped graduates according to their main outcome and sought to understand and predict:

1. Which students were unemployed at the Planning for Success Survey stage, as opposed to having a positive outcome (being in employment or in further study);

2. What factors drew or determined some graduates to further study and others to employment (of whatever type);

3. What factors had the most influence in distinguishing those who were employed in professional or managerial roles from those who were employed in non-professional roles;

4. What factors meant that some graduates were able to achieve full-time professional or managerial roles, with others occupying part-time roles;

duties and coding against the SOC classification. All roles falling into the top 3 SOC codes are defined as professional or managerial'.

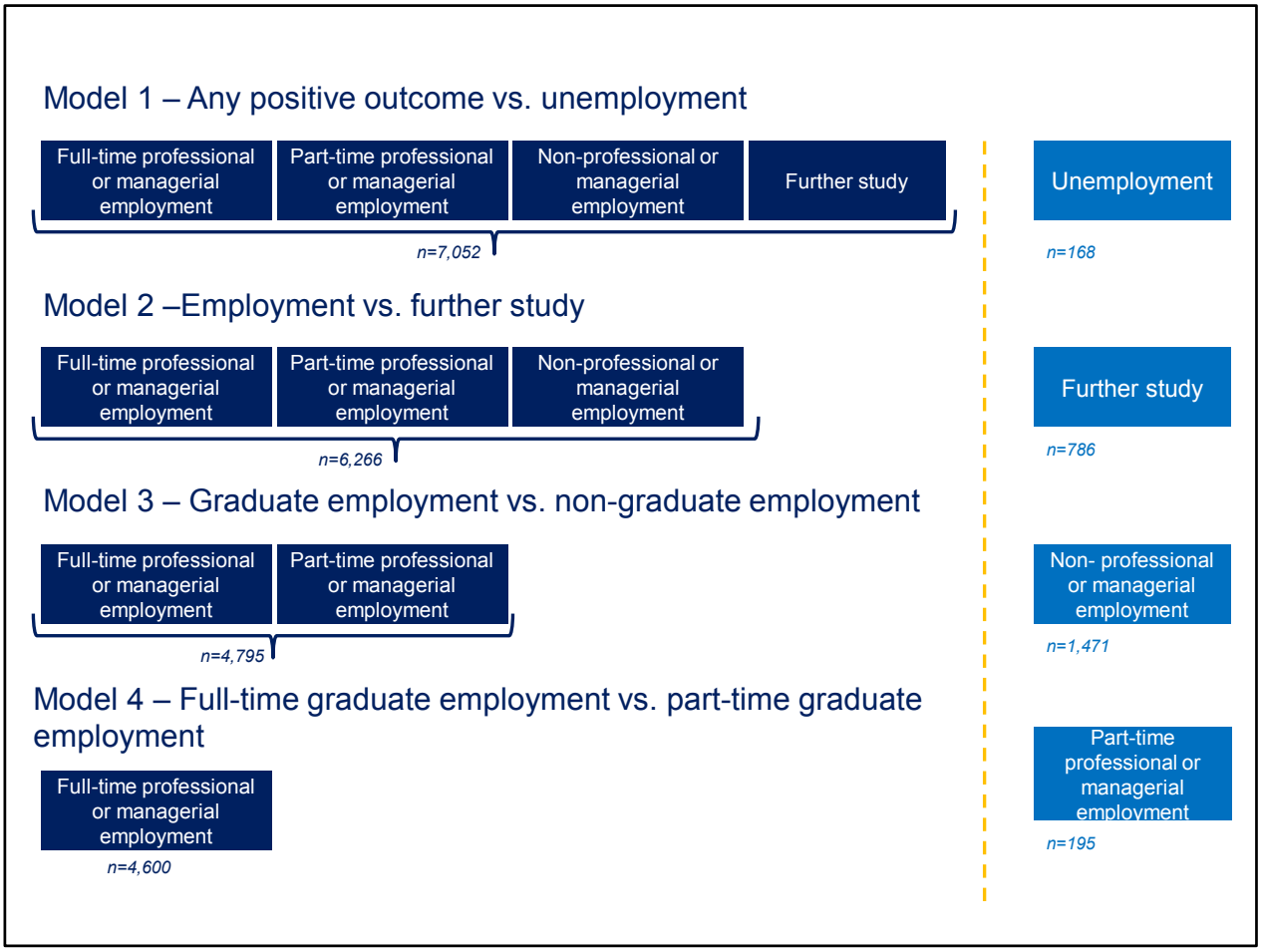


Figure 8.1 Models tested using CCR analysis

The remainder of this chapter will report which factors influence each outcome, and to what extent.

Employment or study as opposed to unemployment

Based on the regression analysis, and as one might expect, there are a greater number and combination of behaviours, characteristics and factors which appear to impact on whether a graduate was in employment or further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage as opposed to unemployment than on any other paired comparison of outcomes .

The two factors which were found to be most important in determining whether graduates were in employment or study as opposed to unemployment were: whether or not the graduate undertook paid work either while at university or in the six months after; and their approach to applying to jobs. Graduates who undertook paid work unrelated to the career they wanted to pursue while studying towards their undergraduate degree, or applied only to what graduates considered to be *graduate level* jobs(with most applications made while at university) were most likely to be in *any* employment or study two and a half years after completing their undergraduate degree. Each of these factors was as important as the other.

This is in line with earlier findings in both Chapter 4, in which it was reported that undertaking paid work while at university or in the six months after helped graduates gain employment by both the DLHE and Planning for Success Survey points and in Chapter 7, which showed that those who adopted a more targeted approach to job applications experienced more positive outcomes by the Planning for Success Survey point.

Although an important predictor, whether or not a graduate adopted a very targeted approach to job applications could be considered rather 'obvious' in determining a positive employment or study outcome. So in acknowledgement of this and to allow a better understanding of what else was important in leading graduates to an outcome of employment or further study as opposed to unemployment, the model was re-run excluding the 'focussed application approach' predictor[24].

The second output showed that having a career plan upon leaving university was most important in leading graduates into employment or further study by the Planning for Success Survey point. Knowing exactly what job or career to pursue at this point or having a good idea about types of jobs or careers was most important in determining employment or further study.

Slightly less important, but also a key feature of the first run of the model, was whether a graduate had undertaken any paid work while at university or in the six months after.

Of roughly equal importance, but around two to three times less important than undertaking paid work, in determining an outcome of employment or further study were:

- Having chosen to study a subject because it was a pre-requisite for a chosen career;
- Having undertaken shorter structured non-compulsory work placements;
- Having made job applications within six months of completing their undergraduate degree;
- Gender – female graduates being more likely to report an outcome of employment or further study as opposed to unemployment;
- Being a student representative at university or in the 6 months after.

Undertaking a graduate internship, work experience as part of a course (either an industrial or sandwich year placement or a shorter structured work placement) and university TRAC grouping were less important still but exerted some influence on graduate outcomes. Those who undertook either of these types of work experience or attended universities with lower research incomes or teaching institutions were more likely to end up

[24] See Table J in the Technical Annex for results from the first run of Model 1, and Table K for results from the second run.

in ***any*** employment or further study rather than unemployment at the Planning for Success Survey stage.

The predictors used can be grouped by broad type; e.g. type of university attended or gender can be categorised as demographic predictors, reasons for going to university or the extent to which graduates knew what job or type or career they wanted to pursue could be grouped under attitudinal predictors, others focussed on the type of work experience undertaken. Grouping predictors in such a way shows that those that were about graduates' attitudes to career planning were most important in determining an outcome of employment or further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage and that work experience was slightly less important.

Employment as opposed to further study

Slightly fewer factors were found to be important for Model 2 - determining whether those graduates who reported a positive outcome were in employment as opposed to further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage. Similar to Model 1, whether a graduate had applied to further study was the most influential factor in whether they were in employment as opposed to further study, and the model therefore was re-run to exclude this factor[25]

Although university TRAC grouping had a relatively low influence over whether graduates entered into a positive outcome (employment or further study rather than unemployment) in the first outcome model, it was actually the key determinant in whether graduates entered employment instead of further study. This means that graduates who attended institutions with lower research incomes or teaching institutions (TRAC Group C-F institutions) were more likely to have entered into employment whereas those who attended universities with higher research incomes (TRAC Group A-B universities) were more likely to be in further study. This builds on previous conclusions based on the bivariate analysis in Chapter 3 which found that around one quarter of graduates from TRAC Group A and B universities were in further study at the Planning for Success Survey point (24% and 26% respectively) .

Secondary to TRAC grouping was a predictor that could be regarded a measure of a graduate's proactivity in pursuing their career plan: whether or not a graduate had made job applications sooner (either while at university or in the six months after as opposed to later than this). This was roughly half as important as university TRAC classification, with those who had made job applications while at university or in the six months after more likely to be in employment than further study[26].

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[25] See Table L in the Technical Annex for the results from the first run of Model 2, and Table M for results from the second run.

[26] This groups will also include those graduates who at DLHE were studying three year long postgraduate courses and therefore not interested in making job applications sooner

The other main factor but less important still than TRAC classification and a graduate's approach to job applications in determining whether an individual was in employment or further study was degree class. In line with findings reported earlier in Chapter 3, the multivariate analysis showed that those awarded a first-class degree were more likely to be in study at the Planning for Success Survey stage than employment.

The combination of university TRAC grouping and degree class meant that overall, demographic predictors were most important in determining whether students ended up in further study or in employment.

There were a few other factors that influenced whether graduates were in employment or further study at the Planning for Success Survey stage and these were (in order of importance):

- Having undertaken paid work whilst at university or in the six months after (those who did paid work were more likely to be in employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage);
- Having participated in any volunteering or charity work whilst at university of in the six months after (those who volunteered were more likely to be in study);
- Having undertaken a graduate internship (more likely to be in employment);
- Having chosen to go to university mainly because a degree was needed to pursue a specific career (more likely to be in study).

Professional or managerial employment as opposed to non-professional employment

As with the previous models, the most important factor in determining whether a graduate ended up in professional or managerial employment as opposed to non-professional employment on the first run was whether they had applied only to graduate-level positions whilst at University. The model was re-run to exclude this[27].

Knowing exactly what they wanted to do or having a good idea about types of jobs and careers upon completing university was most important in governing whether or not those in employment at the Planning for Success Survey stage worked in professional or managerial level roles. Those who had the clearest idea about jobs and careers were more likely to have ended up in professional or managerial positions. This builds on the bivariate analysis in Chapter 8 which showed that those in professional or managerial employment had the clearest career plans of all groups upon leaving university.

[27] See Table N in the Technical Annex for results from the first run of Model 3, and Table O for results from the second run.

Slightly less important was university TRAC grouping. In the previous model, we saw that graduates who attended lower TRAC group institutions were more likely to have entered into employment per se; this model then shows that they were, however, more likely to be working in non-professional employment. Again this develops previous findings presented in Chapter 3.

Around half as influential as TRAC grouping in determining professional or managerial or non-professional employment were:

- Having chosen to go to university mainly because a degree was needed to pursue a specific career was likely to lead to professional or managerial employment;
- Gender – female graduates were more likely to report an outcome of non-professional employment;
- Having done a vacation internship, which was more likely to result in professional or managerial level employment.

There were also a number of other predictors which had some bearing on whether an individual entered into professional or managerial or non-professional employment which were roughly as influential as each other, but notably less impactful than those cited above.

Having had paid work whilst at university or in the six months after or participated in a graduate internship were both found to lead to graduates acquiring professional or managerial level work while graduates from households classified in lower SEC groups and lower degree classifications were determinants of non-professional employment.

Overall the multivariate analysis showed that, excluding the approach to job applications, attitudinal factors were most important in determining whether a graduate entered into professional or managerial or non-professional level employment.

Full-time professional or managerial employment as opposed to part-time professional or managerial employment

Of all the models constructed, comparing full-time professional or managerial employment outcomes with part-time professional or managerial employment was determined by the fewest number of predictors.

As was the case with the first model, having a very targeted approach to job applications was most important in influencing whether an individual entered into full-time professional or managerial employment. Those who applied only to what the graduate considered to be *graduate level* jobs (with most applications made while at university) more often ended up in full-time professional or managerial employment rather than part-time.

As was the case for the first model, the 'focussed application approach' predictor could be considered rather an obvious factor to include in the analysis and as such we also ran the model excluding this predictor to gain a better understanding of the relative importance of

the underlying factors resulting in full-time versus part-time professional or managerial employment[28].

The second run showed that involvement in unpaid work experience was most important in distinguishing between full-time and part-time professional or managerial employment – the latter was driven by involvement in unpaid work. Again this provides greater insight into findings in Chapter 5 in which it was reported that unpaid work was very likely to have been undertaken by those whose main activity was a part-time professional or managerial role at the Planning for Success Survey stage.

Slightly less important in determining part-time professional or managerial employment was involvement in volunteering and charity work and around half as important again was institutional TRAC grouping; graduates in part-time professional or managerial work more likely attended institutions with lower research incomes or teaching institutions.

[28] See Table P in the Technical Annex for results from the first run of Model 4, and Table Q for results from the second run

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