



UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN STUDENTS' UNION
2015/16 Employability Survey Analysis
Are You Ready?

The Students' Union 'Are You Ready? Employability Survey provided an opportunity to gather student opinion on the current career/employability support provisions across the University of Lincoln and the SU. In addition, the survey highlights students' development needs in the areas of skill, knowledge and experience. The data should be used to develop services for the SU and the institution in order to make them more impactful for our member, ultimately increasing their benefit and ensuring that all relevant partners are working to ensure students have the skills, knowledge and experiences that they want, and that they need in order to be employable after university.

Headline Results

- 59% of students do not know where the Careers & Employability Service is located
- 98% of students feel it is important to be able to access career/employability information while at university
- 18% of students do not know that they have a College Careers Advisor; of those who are aware they have one, 40% do not know how to contact them
- Students in the Lincoln School of Film & Media (CoA), and Schools of Engineering (CoS) and Sport & Exercise Science (CoSS) feel their Schools do enough to promote generally about employability and careers
- The majority of students intend to get a job relevant to their degree after finishing university

Development Areas

- Increased bespoke content, more specifically tailored to specific learning areas of UoL
- Increase awareness and promotion of the C&E service generally
- Increase promotion of the benefits of employability offerings from the SU and University, ensuring services stake a claim to these provisions in order to make services' impact clear
- Partnership work between the Students' Union and University to increase promotion of career/employability focussed services and opportunities
- Encourage and support students in being more aware of the skills and experiences they are developing (as well as their development areas) in order to assist their self-promotion and self-awareness, two weaker areas in the data which would ultimately benefit from, for example, interview technique advice
- Embed recommendations and development areas into SU Strategic Theme of 'Employability'

Recommendations

- Increase publicity of the Careers & Employability service and its sub-services, with attention to their benefit for students' futures
- More effectively publicise the location of the C&E service, responding, if necessary, with a complete relocation, as has already happened with Job Shop and Lincoln Award
- Reflect this interest in 'the future' in Union messages regarding the employability agenda
- Timetable visits for Level 3+ students to visit the Careers service once per term
- Focus dialogues on skills development – '[this] is what you have gained...' – and being work-ready, in both the Union and University, committing to making students aware of the benefit and significance of all the extra-curricular activity of which they are a part
- Adjust the approach to SU Volunteering to reflect the self-development purpose of volunteering opportunities, giving less strength to the altruistic context
- Students' Union to consider creating a 'job agency' which takes students through the recruitment process in ways which are relevant to their degrees and/or career aspirations, with the specific intention of helping students develop
- Promote the Careers Advisor early on in the university journey for Level One students, even including this in pre-arrival materials
- Embed significant amounts of careers advice and information at course-level; this could efficiently and engagingly be delivered through the Personal Tutors scheme
- Facilitate work experience opportunities for all students, embedding this into the overall study programme
- Increase information around running businesses, in reflection of the University's interest in entrepreneurship

Number of Respondents: 3,347		Percentage of Student Body: 23.6%	
Respondents who are Undergraduate: 99%		Respondents who are Postgraduate: 1%	
Respondents who are Mature: 6.7%		Respondents who are International: 3.2%	
College of Arts	College of Science	College of Social Science	
33.3% (28.7% of College)	23.5% (33.4% of College)	43.2% (20.4% of College)	
School	Percentage of Respondents	Percentage of School	
<i>Dept. of Agriculture</i>	0.03%	14.3%	
<i>Lincoln Business School</i>	12.99%	13.7% (largest School)	
<i>Lincoln Law School</i>	4.97%	35.2%	
<i>Lincoln School of Film & Media</i>	9.81%	31.2%	
<i>School of Architecture & Design</i>	7.11%	21.9%	
<i>School of Chemistry</i>	2.97%	34.1%	
<i>School of Computer Science</i>	7.02%	31.2%	
<i>School of Engineering</i>	1.87%	31.2%	
<i>School of English & Journalism</i>	6.27%	32.9%	
<i>School of Fine & Performing Arts</i>	5.53%	31.5%	
<i>School of Health & Social Care</i>	6.54%	14.4%	
<i>School of History & Heritage</i>	4.58%	30.1%	

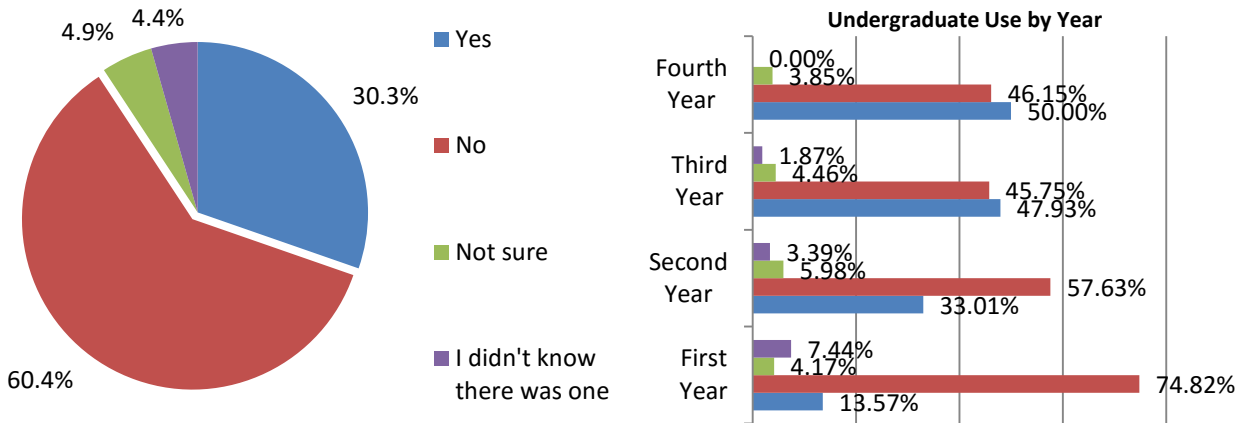
<i>School of Life Sciences</i>	9.24%	37.8%
<i>School of Mathematics & Physics</i>	0.54%	39.1% (smallest School)
<i>School of Pharmacy</i>	1.75%	49.2%
<i>School of Psychology</i>	10.97%	38.2%
<i>School of Social & Political Science</i>	5.06%	34.7%
<i>School of Sport & Exercise Science</i>	2.65%	30.9%

Response rates across all three Colleges and for all Schools fall well above the 10 percent turnout standard which is considered to ensure data is representative of all members of a given group. The same can be said for turnout by year of study. as a results, the information within this report can be used with confidence at College-, School-, and Course-level.

RESULTS

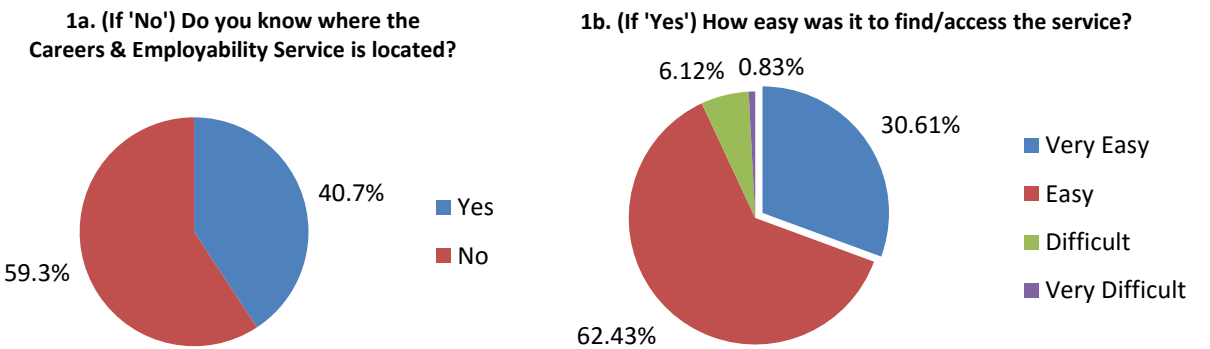
SERVICES

1. Have you ever used the University’s Careers & Employability Service, including attending their events, workshops, or conferences?

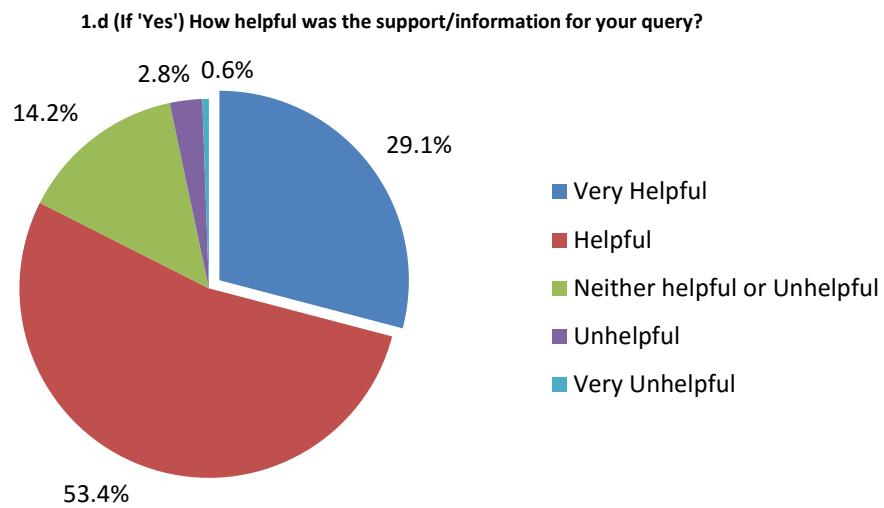


Of the 3,347 students surveyed, over 60% have not used the Careers & Employability service; positively, only 4.4% did not know that the service existed. Over 30% of respondents have used it, though approximately 46% of all Third and Fourth Year respondents seemingly have never used the service. This is concerning given that we would hope by these points in their studies that students have engaged with the service in order to make themselves more employable or to gain valuable advice and information about their future, looking first and foremost to the Careers & Employability service itself for this.

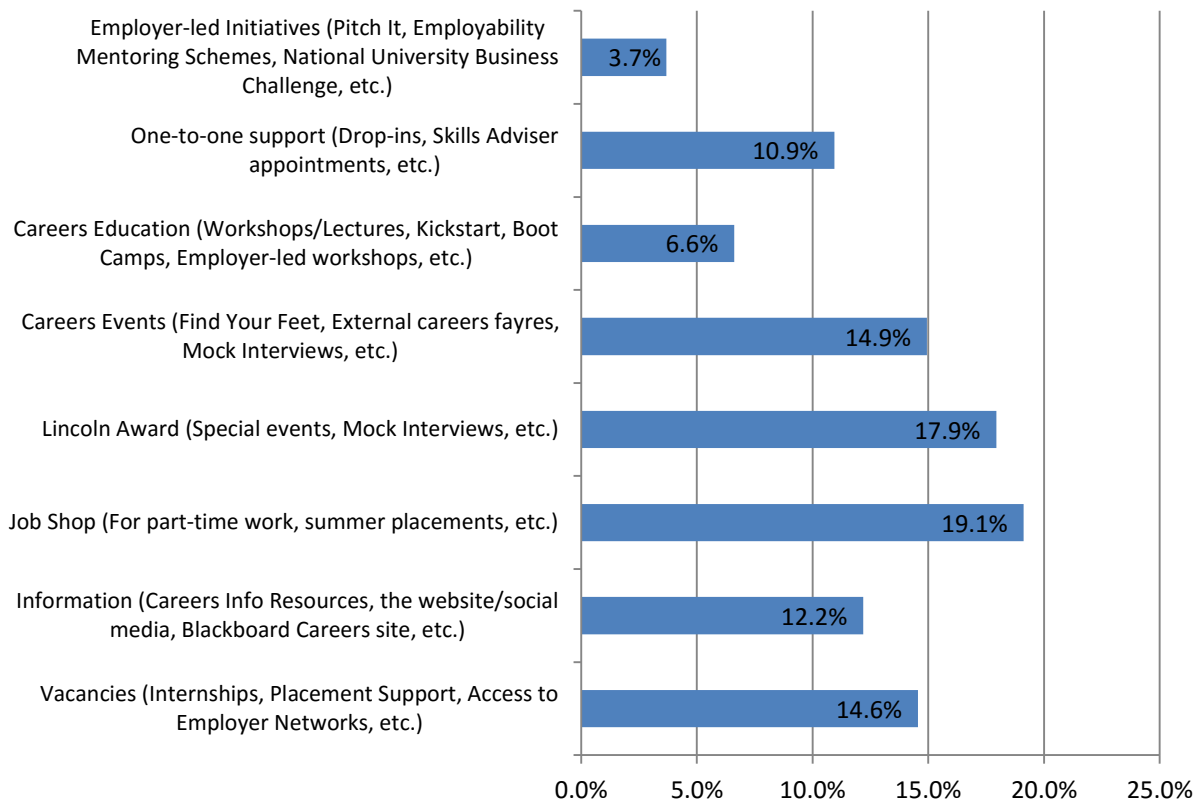
As shown in the chart below-left, almost 60% of the approximate 2,030 respondents who have not used the service do not know where it is located, although 93% of those who have used it found it easy or very easy to access, shown below-right. In order to increase use of the service, the location should be more effectively publicised in the short-term, through relevant partners and online information, and arguably changed in the long-term. Equally, it would be useful to understand why those who do know where the service is located have chosen not to use it.



In excess of 82% of students who have used the service have found the support and information to be useful, with less than three and a half percent finding the opposite; it is also positive to see that ambivalent responses make up only 14.2% of the total.

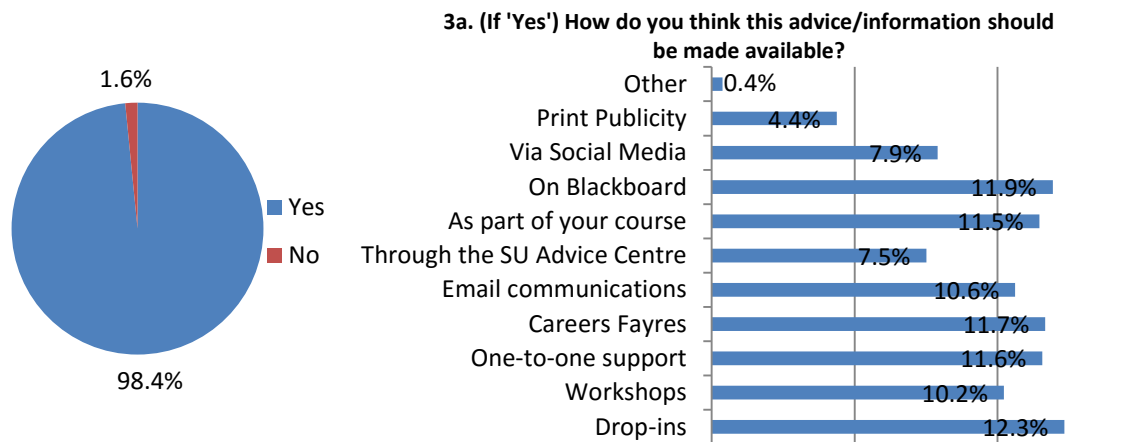


2. What types of existing careers services are you already aware of?



As expected, the most well-known careers services are Lincoln Award and Job Shop. These are arguably the two most significant parts of the whole service provision, with Lincoln Award in particular spanning all areas of C&E in one way or another. The awareness shown above is reflected in the interest we see by way of traffic to these sections of the Students' Union website. The services of which fewer respondents are aware include employer-led initiatives such as 'Pitch It' and careers education features such as 'Kickstart' and 'boot camps'. There is a certain level of comparability between the styles of these services, which may be why they both have lower awareness; equally, promotion may be less intense for these services, and their being less established will also mean that they are not as memorable or recognisable.

3. Do you think it is important to be able to access career/employability advice and information while at university?



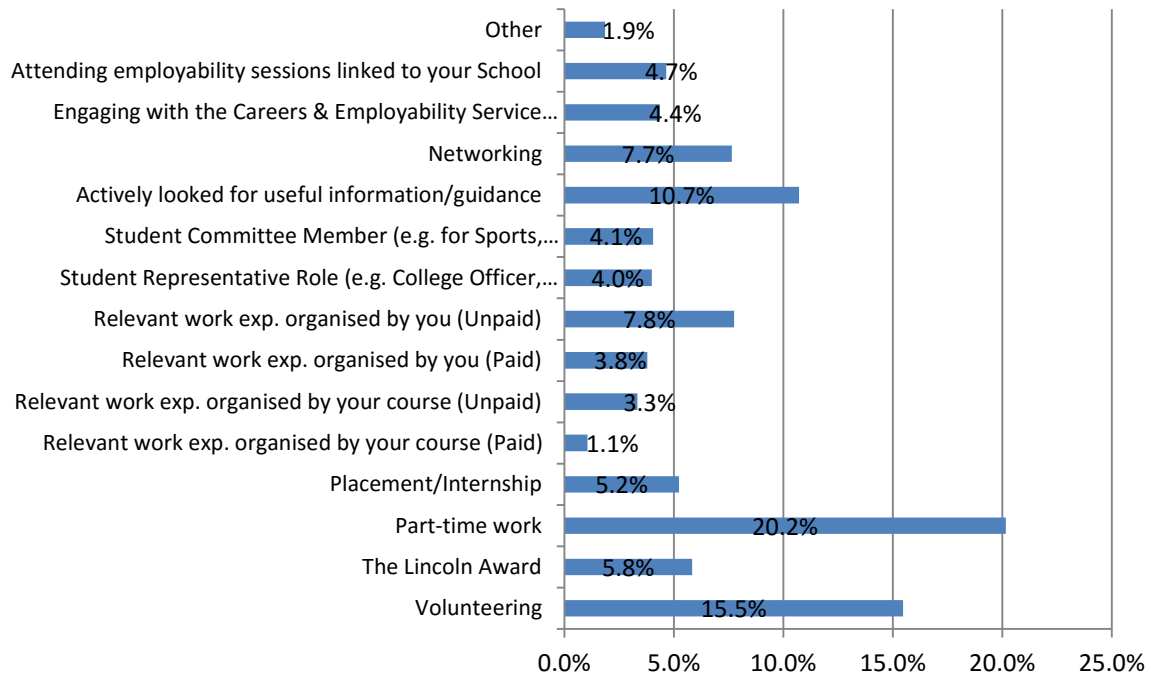
Over 98% of survey respondents believe it is important to be able to access employability- and careers-focused information while at university. While this is a promising statistic, attention should be given to potential reasons for the disparity between this and the percentage of those who actually have accessed such information; that is to say, if it is considered so important by so many, why is there such a large proportion of students who have not engaged with the information available to them through the Careers & Employability service?

The most preferred method of supplying this information is through drop-ins – positive, because these are long-standing, frequent and lengthy; this is fairly closely followed by ‘On Blackboard’, ‘Careers Fayres’ and ‘One-to-one support’, the latter being unsurprising because this forms an extension of the style of service provided through drop-ins. ‘As part of your course’ is also a prevalent choice; as will become apparent throughout this analysis, creating course-level significance by putting the strength into the grass-roots level of the learning environment is a theme which should be given significant attention, such as through Personal Tutoring – the same can be said for work experience, which is referenced as desirable or necessary in numerous response areas.

When asked why they feel the above is important, the majority of reflections address being ‘prepared’ (that is to say, job-ready and employable), and the benefit of the information in giving students direction, particularly when they are unsure about what they wish their next steps to be after university.

BEING EMPLOYABLE

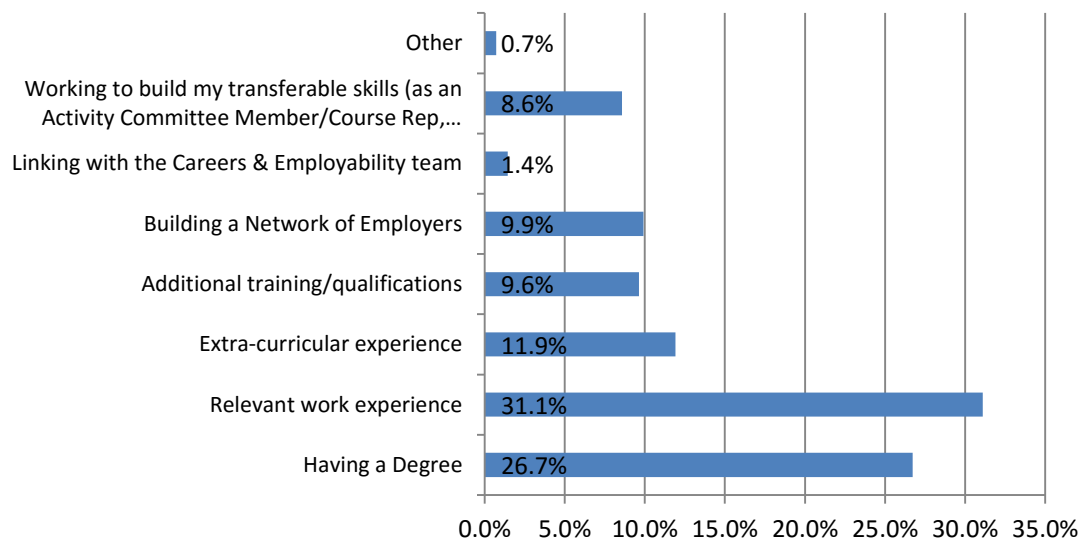
4. What have you already done to make yourself more employable?



The majority of respondents identified part-time work and volunteering as ways through which they have made themselves more employable. The former is likely popular because it has the additional benefit of increased financial freedom and the latter because it can be relatively flexible, can be tailored to particular interests or aspirations, and is well-publicised through our channels. Volunteering likely also rates highly because it crosses over a number of our services (Activities Committee Members and Student Representatives, for example), and can also be easily accessed through other organisations such as 'Do It'. 'Other' options address a huge range of alternatives, such as online skills courses, coaching sports, Duke of Edinburgh, running an online business, and much more.

Data from this question also identifies a significant development point for the Students' Union, regarding the Volunteering service. A considerable percentage of respondents selected 'Volunteering' as an avenue through which they have made themselves more employable; this suggests a shift in reasons that students volunteer – or that our perception of those reasons is not accurate. That is to say, it is clear that volunteering is not entirely an altruistic and selfless exercise, but rather that students volunteer for self-development and progression. Strategically relevant (given the 'Employability' theme which has come from our Strategic Research), our organisation must reconsider its approach to volunteering in order to reflect students' interest in the service – an interest based on internal factors, rather than external benefits. Conversations around volunteering should significantly reflect these matters, and pay less attention to the community benefits, as this is arguably has less relevance to our members' engagement with the service.

5. What do you think is most important for securing employment after university?



As is to be expected from a survey of university students, possessing a degree is considered of significant importance for securing a job, being chosen second most often. It is interesting to see that 'Relevant work experience' rates the highest, suggesting that dialogues from the University, Students' Union, employers, etc. regarding the idea that 'a degree is not enough' have been successful in making students more aware of the benefit and importance of being knowledgeable in relevant areas, with significant experience as evidence. Extra-curricular experience rates third most highly, though 15% lower than the second highest and very closely to the lower end of the scale. In order to further support the 'not enough' adage above by way of increasing the frequency with which this option would be selected, continued and prominent promotion should be given to extra-curricular opportunities, such as sign language or first aid courses, with attention to their benefit and in reflection of the ever-increasingly competitive job market. This dialogue should continue and should be used to encourage engagement with services like SU Volunteering and the Lincoln Award.

Considered of lowest importance is 'Linking with the Careers & Employability Team'. This does not necessarily suggest that the service is considered of lower value, rather that the opportunities it provides (some of which are arguably seen in the other listed options) are not understood in the context of the service. This presents a chance to better promote the opportunities the service provides, and for the service to stake more of a claim on the value they are directly or externally providing through those opportunities – that is to say, to more confidently promote the benefit of what they do; all options are actually delivered by careers, but students do not see the connection or the benefit.

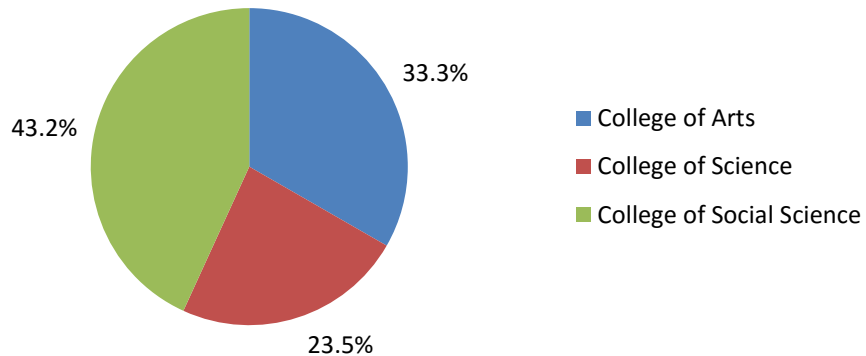
Data in this question arguably highlights a gap in employability-focussed services which the Students' Union would do well to consider fulfilling. The items listed above form the various parts of the service offered by a typical 'job agency'. To meet students' needs and reflect the various elements listed, the Union may respond strategically by way of creating bespoke and varied opportunities and processes seen in job agencies in order to assist students in experiencing, learning from, and being successful within recruitment processes.

data in this report and across interactions with various services that the missing part of the conversation is the point at which we and other colleagues say, in no uncertain terms, '[these] are the skills you have developed, and this is [this] is their benefit'. As referenced in Q6, self-awareness is a potential student development area; what's more, it is difficult to identify the skills you are developing without guidance from experts – the role to be played by Union and University colleagues – and as such there are potentially thousands of students (consider Activity Committee Members, for example, who alone total 600) who are not being made aware of all the ways they are growing in a professional context. This must be addressed in the Union's employability-focussed services and by relevant University colleagues; being at the centre of the service delivery, we have a responsibility in this area.

TAILORED TO YOUR DEGREE

Questions in this section were designed by each College Officer, in partnership with the SU President, in order to establish ownership of their data and ensure that their questions were able to address the interest or concern points in each of these academic segments.

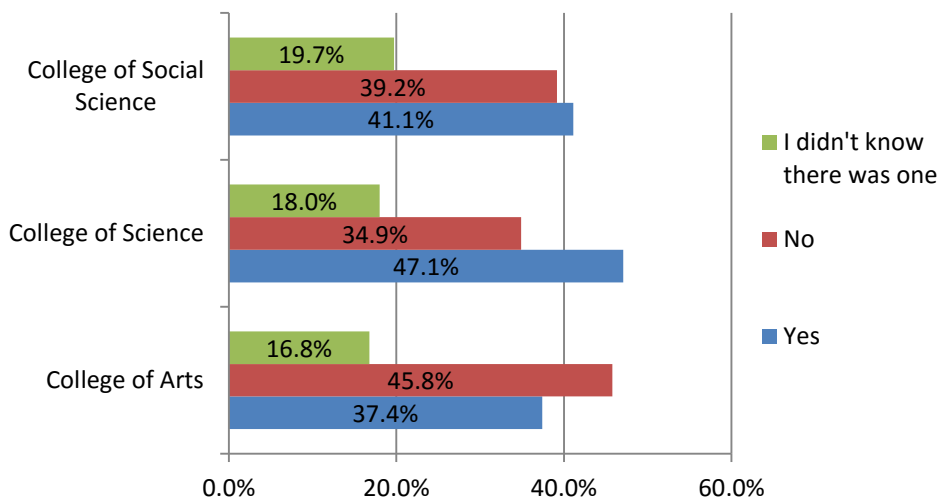
8. In which College are you a student?



The majority of respondents (43.2%) came from the College of Social Science. The above values represent the percentage of the overall responses by College. The figures below represent percentage turnout per College.

Percentage turnout of each College based on respective total student numbers		
College of Arts	College of Science	College of Social Science
28.7%	32.6%	20.4%

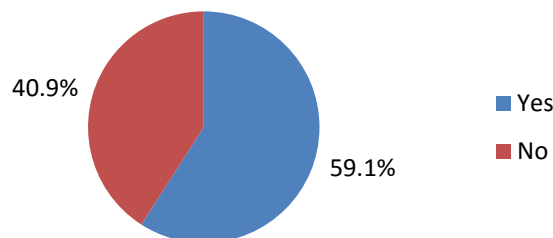
9. Do you know how to contact your College Careers Advisor?



In both the College of Science and College of Social Science, the majority stated that they did know how to contact their College Careers Advisor, where in Arts the majority did not know. Between 16 and 20 percent of respondents across all Colleges did not know that they had a College Careers Advisor. This, alongside the high percentage of respondents who do not know how to contact their Careers Advisor, is evidence that more promotional activity and engagement opportunities need to be delivered concerning these staff roles, so that all students are aware who their Advisor is, what they can do for them, and how to get in touch with them. It would be advisable to include the Advisors in Level One Induction activity and to promote their presence to students as part of their pre-arrival information.

College of Arts

10. Do you feel that your School does enough to promote and inform generally about careers and employability?

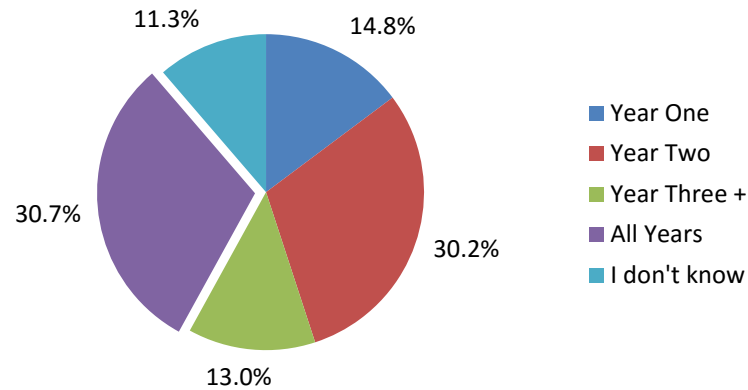


Percentage Responses by School		
Lincoln School of Film & Media	Yes	No
	67.8%	32.2%
School of Architecture & Design	Yes	No
	54.4%	45.6%
School of English & Journalism	Yes	No
	60.6%	39.4%
School of Fine & Performing Arts	Yes	No
	49.5%	50.5%
School of History & Heritage	Yes	No
	19.5%	80.5%

An overall majority of respondents from the College of Arts felt their School does enough promotion concerning employability. However, looking more closely, there are significant differences between Schools. Students in the Lincoln School of Film & Media are most satisfied that their School does enough promotion (over 7% more than its next highest competitor), whereas students in the School of History & Heritage have responded 'Yes' significantly less than any other School. Over 80% of their respondents feel the School does not do enough to promote and inform about careers and employability; while this may be owing to a lack of clear progression routes in suitable areas, or fewer jobs in relevant fields, it is evident that significant attention should be given to improving such

important content within this School in particular, in order to see future scores (across the College) more closely match those of the Schools of English & Journalism and Film & Media.

11. At what level of your studies have you been/will you be encouraged to engage with your career planning?

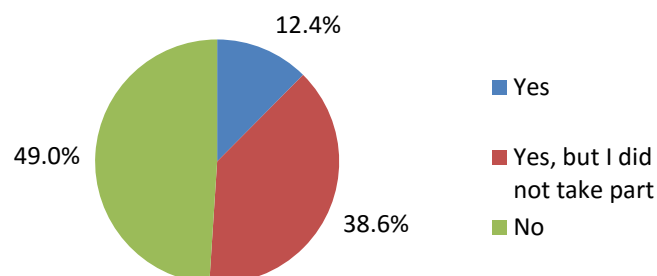


Of those who feel their School does enough to promote and inform about careers and employability, more than one third identified that conversations concerning career planning have happened in second or third year, with over 30% noting that such conversations happened in all years.

12. What sorts of events do you think the Careers & Employability service should be running for College of Arts students?

General feedback addresses variety, workshops, and CV help, among other things. Additional comments request more specific content (such as bespoke fayres, per College), and networking opportunities.

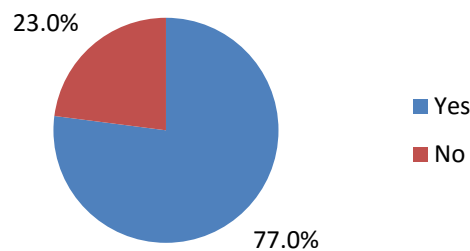
13. Did you know about the Creative Careers Festival, run between 9th and 13th November?



Almost half of the College of Arts students surveyed were not aware of the Creative Careers Festival, and over 38% were aware but did not take part. This suggests an increased need for promotion on one level (for those in the 'No' segment), and greater attention to the benefits of the event for those

who did not take part. For this second group, the data may also suggest that the events were not suitable for all areas of the College, hence the significant number of those who chose not to attend. Large amounts of the CCF feedback positively reflects on content variety and suitability, many noting that it was informative and/or had helped them consider their future further. However, mentions of variety and suitability are equally frequently mentioned in a negative context.

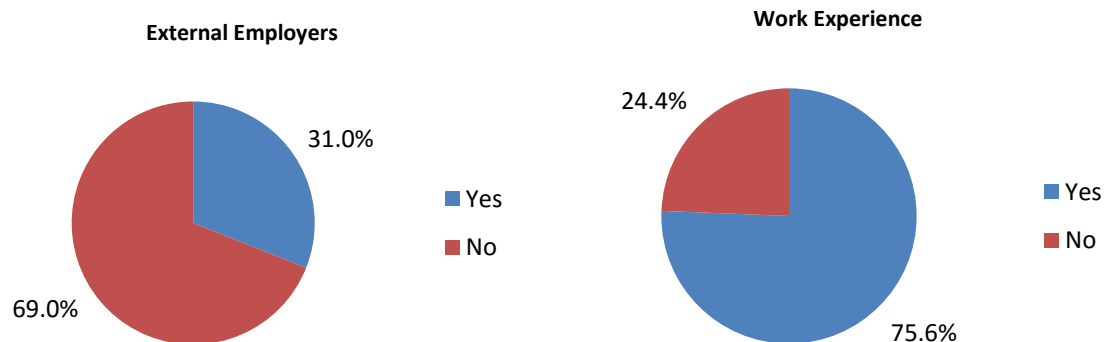
16. Do you feel that you are being equipped with the skills and knowledge you need for when you leave university?



Over three quarters of the College of Arts students surveyed feel they are being well-equipped for life post-university. This reflects responses to Q10 and Q11, which address what is likely to be a significant part of the efforts made to prepare students for when they leave university.

17. Do you feel that there is enough input from external employers on your course? (below-left)

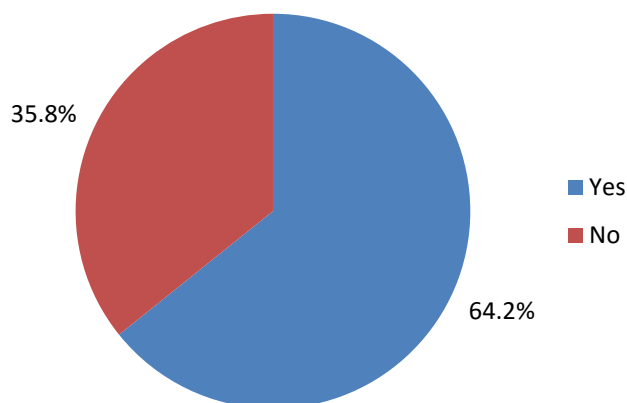
18. Do you think your course should organise mandatory work experience as part of your degree?



Conversely to the above, the majority of Arts students do not feel there is enough input from external employers on their course. This may reflect the fact that most of these students' would like their course to organise mandatory work experience, which would ultimately increase connections made to external employers. Work experience also adds a potential assurance that students could gain employment after their studies.

College of Science

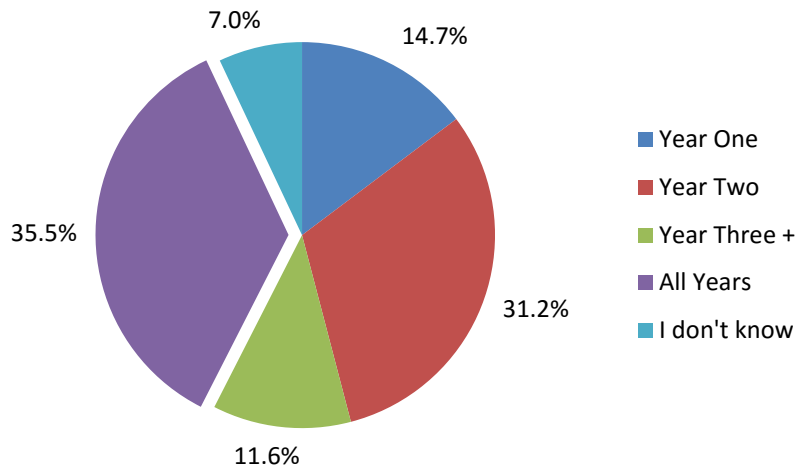
19. Do you feel that your School does enough to promote and inform generally about careers and employability?



Percentage Responses by School		
School of Chemistry	Yes	No
	64.4%	35.6%
School of Computer Science	Yes	No
	64.4%	35.6%
School of Engineering	Yes	No
	79.4%	20.6%
School of Life Sciences	Yes	No
	66%	34%
School of Mathematics & Physics	Yes	No
	16.7%	83.3%
School of Pharmacy	Yes	No
	74.1%	25.9%

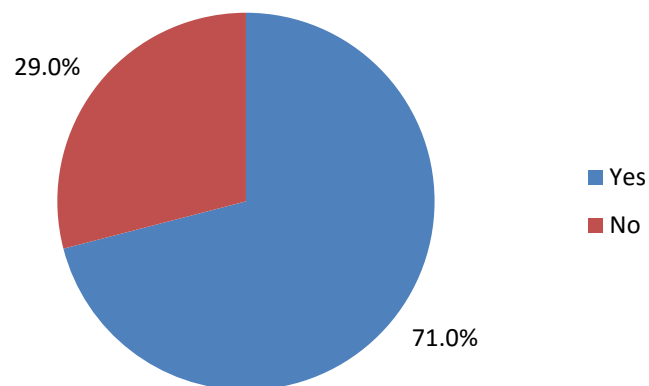
Approximately two thirds of students in the College of Science believe that their School provides enough promotion and information. The School of Engineering shows the most positive perceptions about this information – given their connection to Siemens, for example, this is to be expected – while the School of Maths & Physics fares worst; this may be owing to the age of the School, being the newest to be introduced to the College of Science.

20. At what level of your studies have you been/will you be encouraged to engage with your career planning?



Of those who feel their School does enough to promote and inform about careers and employability, more than 40 percent identified that conversations concerning career planning have happened in second or third year, with over 35% noting that such conversations happened in all years.

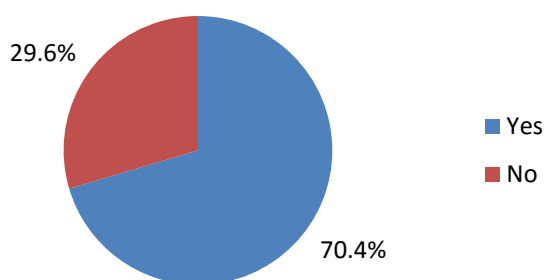
21. Do you feel confident in your relevant technical abilities/knowledge?



Over 70 percent of respondents from the College of Science feel confident in the technical knowledge and ability that they have developed to support their degree and future career. The School of Engineering rates most highly in this question, with Chemistry receiving the fewest 'Yes' responses of all the Schools (though it is still a large majority). Given that all Schools in the College of Science have some amount of high-level technical application, these scores are promising; for Engineering to perform so highly is also arguably testament to the benefit of the School's connection to Siemens.

Percentage Responses by School		
School of Chemistry	Yes	No
	64%	36%
School of Computer Science	Yes	No
	69.5%	30.5%
School of Engineering	Yes	No
	84.1%	15.9%
School of Life Sciences	Yes	No
	68.3%	31.7%
School of Mathematics & Physics	Yes	No
	72.2%	27.8%
School of Pharmacy	Yes	No
	79.3%	20.7%

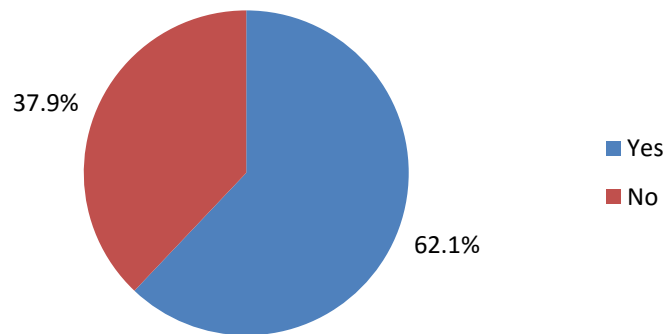
22. Do you feel confident in your relevant theoretical knowledge?



Percentage Responses by School		
School of Chemistry	Yes	No
	61%	39%
School of Computer Science	Yes	No
	71.6%	28.4%
School of Engineering	Yes	No
	88.9%	11.1%
School of Life Sciences	Yes	No
	67.9%	32.1%
School of Mathematics & Physics	Yes	No
	61.1%	38.9%
School of Pharmacy	Yes	No
	81%	19%

Data regarding theoretical knowledge reflects that of technical knowledge, with a majority across the College answering 'Yes', and with Engineering performing most highly; once again, the School of Chemistry has seen the lowest number of 'Yes' responses, though this still forms a majority.

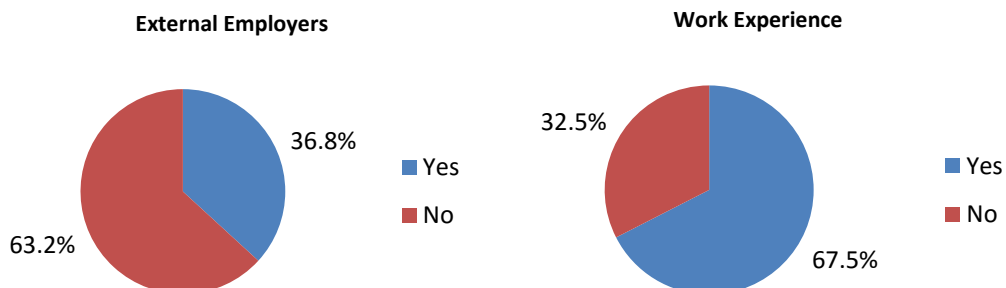
23. If your course does not offer it, would you like to take a year out from your studies to complete a placement/sandwich year?



Of those respondents whose courses do not already offer placement/sandwich years as part of the study programme, over 62 percent would like this option to be provided. Given the nature of the courses within these Schools, this would be a useful opportunity and would feel a need for relevant experience and beneficial connections to sector-relevant employers (although this need is not unique to the College of Science).

24. Do you feel there is enough input from external employers on your course? (below-left)

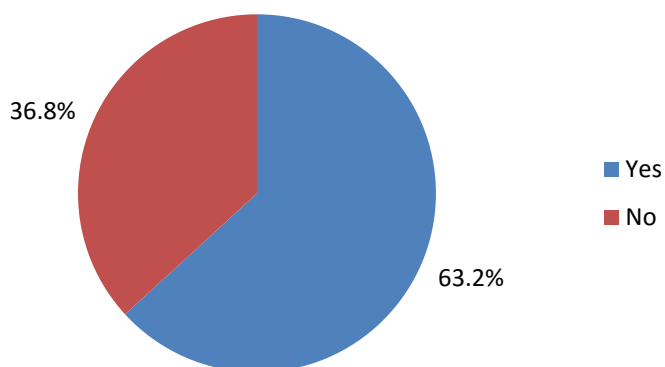
25. Do you think your course should organise mandatory work experience as part of your degree?



The majority of Science students do not feel there is enough input from external employers on their course. This may reflect the fact that most of these students' would like their course to organise mandatory work experience, which would ultimately increase connections made to external employers. Work experience also adds a potential assurance that students could gain employment after their studies. Responses to these questions also reinforces answers to Q24.

College of Social Science

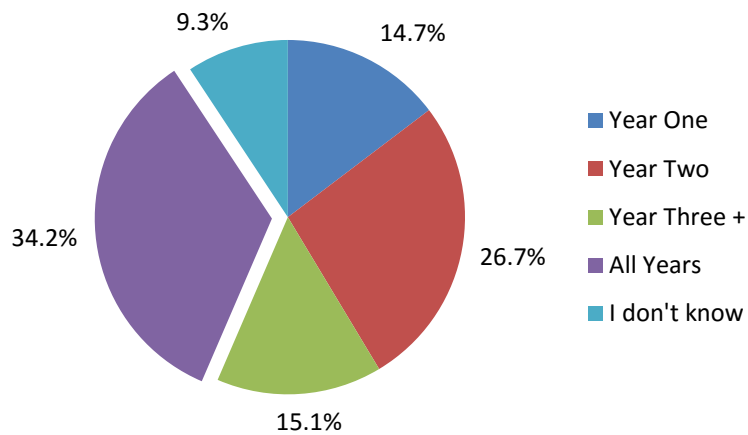
27. Do you feel that your School does enough to promote and inform generally about careers and employability?



Percentage Responses by School		
Lincoln Business School	Yes	No
	64.1%	35.9%
Lincoln Law School	Yes	No
	72.5%	27.5%
School of Health & Social Care	Yes	No
	62.7%	37.3%
School of Psychology	Yes	No
	59.1%	40.9%
School of Social & Political Science	Yes	No
	52.9%	47.1%
School of Sport & Exercise Science	Yes	No
	74.2%	25.8%

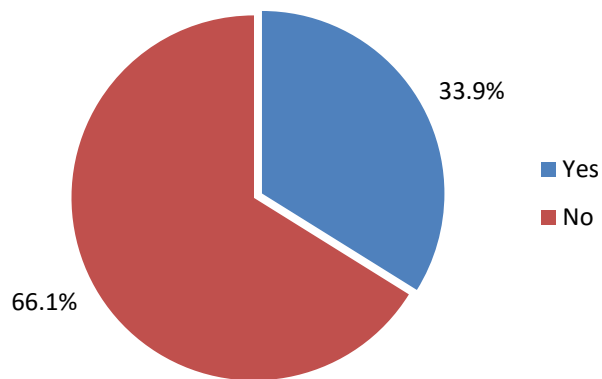
Across the whole of the College of Social Science, almost two thirds of students feel their School does enough to promote generally about careers and employability. The School of Sport & Exercise Science performs best on this question, with nearly three quarters feeling their School does enough; the School of Social & Political Science scored lowest, with almost half of their respondents feeling that their School’s information concerning careers and employability is not enough. It would be beneficial for this School in particular (and arguably the School of Psychology) to study the work being done in Sport & Exercise Science in this area, as a measure of best practice.

28. At what level of your studies have you been/will you be encouraged to engage with your career planning?



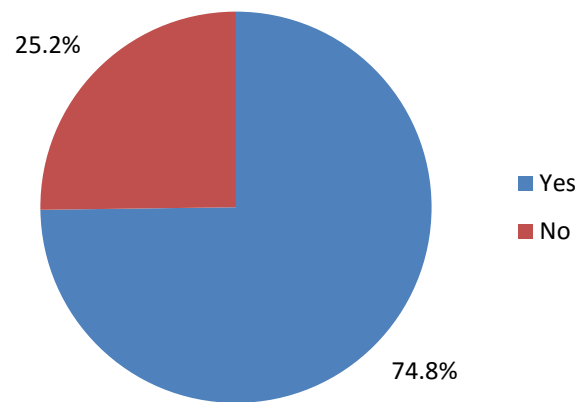
Of those who feel their School does enough to promote and inform about careers and employability, more than 40 percent identified that conversations concerning career planning have happened in second or third year, with almost 35% noting that such conversations happened in all years.

29. Do you feel there is enough input from external employers on your course?



Two thirds of respondents from the College of Social Science feel that there is not enough input from external employers on their course. Given reflections on employability and the potential benefits of engaging with employers, this is to be expected. In a similar context to the inclusion of work experience on courses (noted later), it may prove beneficial to introduce this input from employers as standard, such as through course-based trips and events or guest lectures.

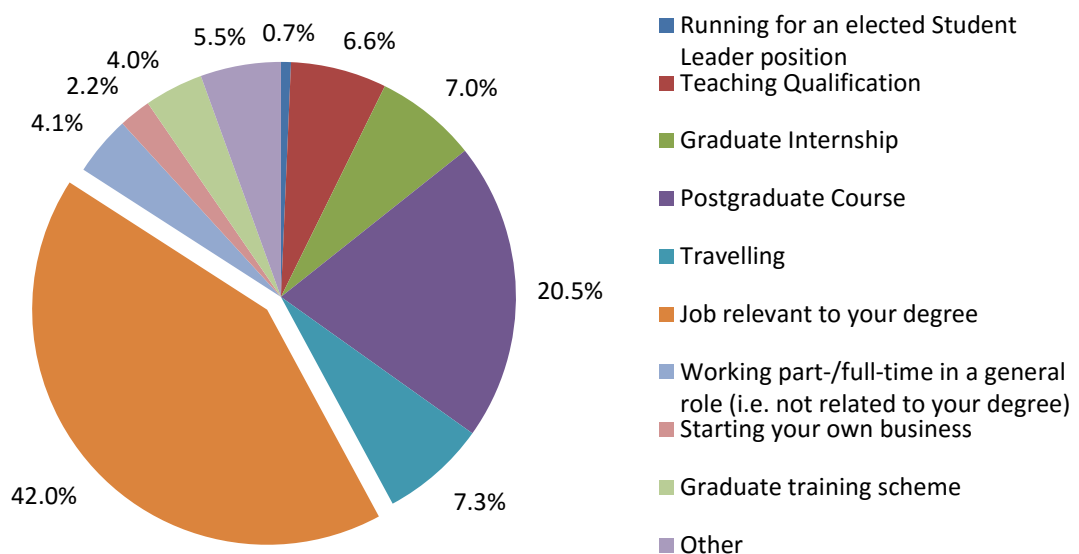
30. Do you think your course should organise mandatory work experience as part of your degree?



Reflecting opinions regarding external employers, nearly 75% of students feel their course should include mandatory work experience as part of the programme. This would offer an opportunity to meet their expectations regarding external employers, though is not the only way through which this can be achieved, as noted above. As has been seen previously, work experience remains a theme of interest and concern; as such, there can be no question that this needs to be built in at programme level in order to meet students' needs and expectations.

THE FUTURE

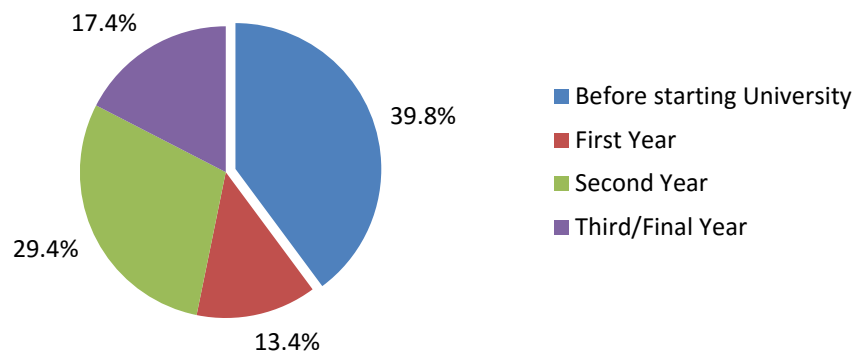
32. After completing your degree, what do you intend your next step to be?



Over 40% of respondents (more than 20 percent higher than the next most popular option) intend to move onto a job relevant to their degree after they graduate. This supports the idea that students are using their degrees as the stepping stone into their careers – as a way of ensuring they are qualified for their desired career. ‘Postgraduate Course’ was the option selected second-most frequently, which may reflect the necessity for PG qualification for a chosen career, or instead simply students’ desire to continue to learn in their chosen area. It is worth considering what can be called ‘the student journey’ at this point; it is considered the norm to move from GCSE to A ‘Level, and from there to Undergraduate Degree. It is not, however, discussed as a potential norm to move from Undergraduate to Postgraduate study – with a significant number of respondents planning on PG study, the University’s interest in retention, and the postgraduate agenda as a whole, we must build these normative conversations into what we do.

There is significantly low interest in ‘Starting your own business’ and ‘Running for an elected Student Leader position’. With the former, attention should be given to increasing interest (and information/support) in this area considering the importance of entrepreneurship to the University’s agenda; the Students’ Union should work to increase interest in Student Leader positions given all that can be learned and experienced in these roles and in consideration of their importance to our organisation.

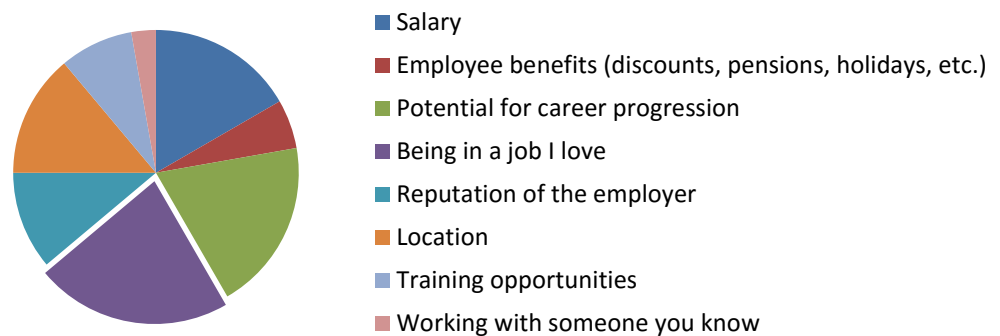
33. At what stage did you/will you start to think about life after university?



Approximately 40 percent of students noted that they thought about life after university even before having attended. The frequency with which 'Second Year' is selected will, in part, reflect previous answer which suggest that a significant amount of careers planning conversations led by Schools are taking place at Level Two. Equally, this may reflect a habitual approach from students across the University, finding that second year is the right time to think about life after university, whether encouraged to by their School or not. Efforts from Careers & Employability and other partners should reflect this habit in order to ensure beneficial information and guidance is given at an appropriate time and one at which students will be more willing to engage.

As referenced in Q7, it is also important to front-load our careers conversations, introducing them, at least in part, early on in the University process. A significant number of responses reference 'Before starting University', and yet relevant conversations at university level are not happening until much later in the process. This should be considered a significant issue because we are essentially wasting the benefit of these pre-degree conversations by creating a cavern of up to a year where little to no conversations on the topic are happening. The Union and University would do well to fill this void at the point of students' first years, in order to maintain interest while they are still engaged.

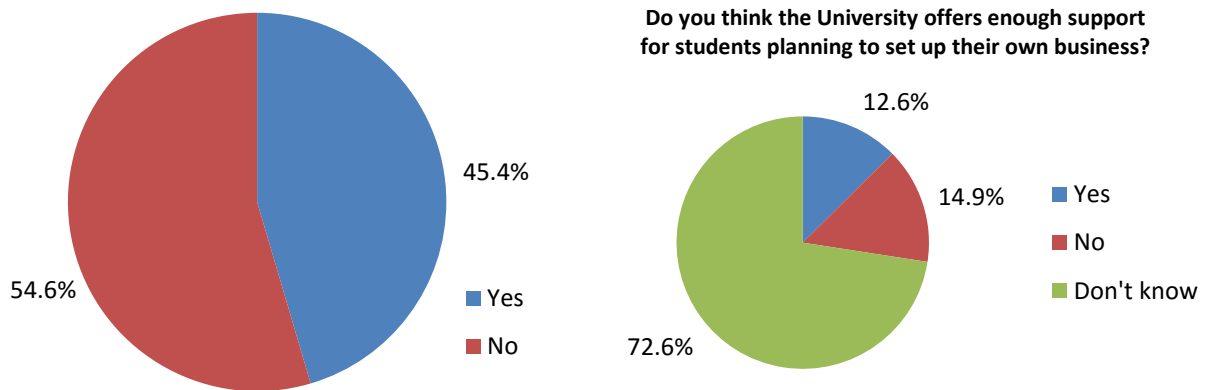
34. What things do you consider highest priority when looking for a job?



The highest priority options are 'Being in a job I love' and 'Potential for career progression', which speak to a more self-reflective approach to employment. Logistical matters ('Location' and 'Salary')

are considered to be next-most important, while 'Working with someone you know' is not considered to be especially important (only 3% of respondents rated this highly).

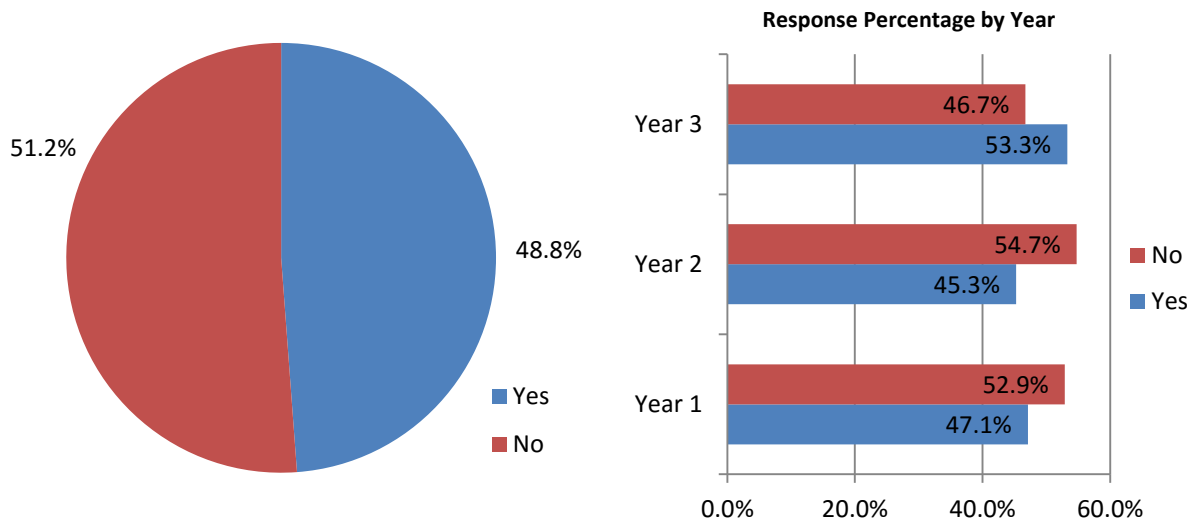
35. Have you ever considered starting your own business?



Nearly 50% of students have considered starting their own business. Although this is not the majority, this is still a significant amount. While the value may reflect the level of support and information available in this area, and a lack of knowledge about what (or whether) support is available (as represented by the chart above-right), we must address the ways to support those who have considered starting their own business, regardless of what is already available.

THE FUTURE

37. Thinking about all this, are you ready?



In consideration of the factors for which students were asked to answer questions, the majority have noted that they are not ready – for the next steps after university, for being employable, and so on – though this is not a vast majority. As is to be expected, more final year students feel they are ready than not, which is not the case for the other years. While this is not especially surprising for Level One students, the responses from Level Two have the highest 'No' selection of all years; this is arguably concerning and suggest that work should be done to bridge the gap between the information students are given/when they start to think about their futures and how prepared the information and support makes them feel. Put simply, if all recommendations in this report are met, the answers to the question above will be significantly more positive.