

EMPLOY Project Student Voices

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Issues and Challenges

- Age and attitudes of employers
- Adults – tied to locality
- Inequalities – class, gender, race, disability
- Lack of cultural and social capital
- Internships / workplacements
- Time (adults)



Class and social capital and social networks

Some of the students I've spoken to, their parents are partners in solicitors so obviously they're going to walk into a job. Definitely down the barrister's route it's about what private school you've been to. I think money definitely because if you haven't got the money you're just not going to the bar. It costs too much money - £18, 000 and £12, 000 for solicitors and then books. I think it's more who you know as well as what university you're from.



Class and culture

...but in the finance industry, as much as they say they can't discriminate for age and all these things, like I know for a fact that they wouldn't be looking for me. Like my accent as well, I put my sentences together, they don't really like. They're not going to have me sitting in a boardroom in Singapore. Do you know what I mean? I wouldn't want to do that anyway...So when it comes to what employers are looking for, I don't think I'm it for a lot of them. (Paul, male adult student)



Gender

- Most of the graduate schemes that are available are for people without responsibilities. I can't go travelling and leave my son at home....There doesn't seem to be any niche for graduate schemes that are solely based locally. The jobs I've looked at, they're looking for people that are flexible and are willing to work all the hours god sends and I have commitments, But that isn't taken into account for the mature student in the job market.
(female student)



Race

- . It was a bit discriminatory I can say because it wasn't, it wasn't very fair to everybody....One of the barriers is racism, that is something that is... it might sound a bit funny but racism still is very rife, even today in the 21st century because what most of my friends are telling me is that the more educated you are, the higher you get, the more... the more you encounter racism out there. So if you are looking for say a managerial job, a top job, that's where the competition is quite high and you are most likely to be competing with the traditional British students or that kind of thing. They are facing still competition there and some of them, it is normally the handpicking is based on race and it can be difficult (A 2x2 Social Studies Student, University of Warwick).

- I applied to the bank and I wasn't enjoying it at the bank because there were a few issues with the management and everything. I wanted to feel comfortable, I think there was a lot of racism so I left... I think the only problem you also have in Cross Country now is the Union are saying there's not a lot of minority in the managerial position. To be honest, I've never seen any, I think there's only one Asian manager and one black manager and that's in Bristol so it's very hard also because I have... I am an undergrad and I am expecting to get to the top but it's very difficult, they would rather take somebody who hasn't even finished a GCSE than consider me. So it's also very difficult to get into the managerial position... Like I said, we black people, we tend to have problems when it comes to getting into other sectors but with health it's so easy the government always need nurses so it's very easy for us to get into that sector so that's the reason I've decided to go back into health (Undergraduate student, University of Warwick).



Age

- The jobs I've looked at they're looking for people that are flexible and are willing to work all the hours god sends and I have commitments but that isn't taken into account for the mature student in the job market.
- Yes at the end of this year I will have a degree but looking at my age and looking at the students – so many young students with the same degree as me when it comes to employment. Employers – maybe they will say 'Yes you have your degree expertise but your age' and would rather being looking at someone younger than me.

- If you want to hire someone and a 25 year old young guy has the same qualification as a 36 year old guy have, even though I might have vast experience, vast life experience that will be beneficial to whatever post is being advertised... I think you will go for the 25 year old guy, you know, because 1) he's young, hasn't got commitments, you know, can move about wherever you want them to move so ideally, ideally I think in terms of employment...it's a huge barrier, yeah it is (Graduate student, Warwick).



Younger students

Being at a top university has made me feel more confident, going into job interviews – knowing that this is an employer that takes a lot of Warwick graduates and I actually feel more confident. And then if I think that with employers if you're in a one to one interview it's your first impression so you could be perfect for the job but if you make a bad first impression, you're probably not going to get it...I think companies are definitely tailoring it like 'this is our role, this is our company, this is who we want for the job'. And they're making that public so you can either choose to pretend to be that person or you can make yourself into that person. And I think no matter what you do if you're not the person the company wants you're not going to get employed.
(Manish)