

Attracting a diverse graduate workforce

We surveyed nearly 3,000 students and graduates to understand their career perceptions and concerns. Our findings showed that 1 in 3 believe coming from a lower socio-economic background heavily impacts someone's career. We wanted to delve deeper into their thoughts surrounding diversity and inclusion throughout the application process and at work.

Concerns during the application process:

39%

believe candidates who attend prestigious universities are favoured by employers

24%

worry they can't afford to relocate for more job opportunities

27%

fear not being able to afford to work for minimum wage or to be on a zero-hour contract

What can employers do to attract a more diverse workforce?

We asked students and graduates what they wanted to see employers implement:

Top 5 factors 2019:

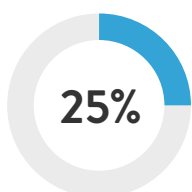
- 1 Practice blind recruitment
- 2 Offer living-wage salaries for graduate-level workers
- 3 Offer financial support with travel
- 4 Offer flexible working opportunities
- 5 Removing minimum requirements (e.g. Russell Group, Degree, 2:1 Degree etc)

Top 5 factors 2020:

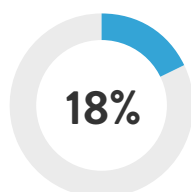
- 1 Practice blind recruitment
- 2 Removing minimum requirements (e.g. Russell Group, Degree, 2.1 Degree etc)
- 3 Offer more opportunities in disadvantaged areas
- 4 Support candidates with travel
- 5 Support finding accommodation

Before starting their graduate role:

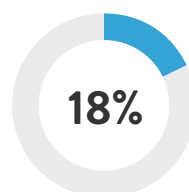
Once a job has been secured, the concerns don't stop there. Students and graduates are also worried about fitting in, these are their biggest concerns:



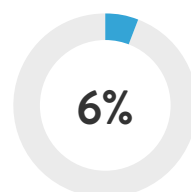
Not coming from a similar socio-economic



Coming from a minority background



Not fitting in to company culture



Having a disability or reduced mobility

Top Tips for attracting a diverse graduate workforce:

Through adapting your recruitment, onboarding and retention strategies, you can encourage candidates from different backgrounds to join, stay and thrive within your company.

Six points to consider are:

1 Celebrate powerful role models within the business who embrace and empower diversity. You could also host insight days for potential candidates to network with these individuals or hold networking lunches when graduates join. This supports relationship building and cultivates learning

2 Encourage reverse mentoring. Pair managers with younger employees across the company so that they can learn from each other. Allowing those who otherwise may not connect to come together can be transforming for the culture of inclusion

3 Whilst you should promote case studies of diverse employees, ensure that these case studies are representative of your company to ensure honesty and authenticity within your recruitment marketing. Moreover, highlight examples of initiatives you have in place that promote diversity and inclusion within your company to encourage prospective candidates to apply

4 Consider blind recruitment. Encourage a Diversity and Inclusion expert in your org to train on unconscious bias, manage applications and anonymise them for the hiring manager/recruitment team. Be sure to communicate this process in the job description

5 Increase face-to-face and virtual engagement at diverse universities. The HEPI rankings indicate the most diverse universities in the UK, where you can then look to deliver workshops with students at these universities

6 Build a safe space for young workers to voice concerns or share any thoughts. We suggest creating different networks within your business for people to be able to speak and meet openly

Our Candidate Compass Report delves deeper into student and graduate career confidence. Read the full report [here](#).