40% of graduates don’t know how to write a CV

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A university degree has long been regarded as the silver bullet to landing the best entry-level jobs in Britain, but recent research suggests that many graduates are still struggling to land the job they want in 2019, because they aren’t being adequately prepared for the job market.

A survey conducted by StandOut CV, the UK’s biggest CV advice website; carried out a survey of 1,000 recent graduates to find out how effective their time at university really is when it comes to securing employment. In particular, they studied the graduate’s ability to create an effective CV and land interviews for their target jobs.

The survey found that whilst 59% of graduates felt confident that they had a strong CV, the remaining 41% still did not know whether their CV was good enough to land them a job in their chosen industry.

When asked, how they learnt to write a CV, the majority of graduates (62%) opted for online advice, and only 30% claimed to have used the services of their university careers advisers, and the remaining 8% relied on families and friends.

Of those who used their university careers adviser services, 50% stated they were “unhappy” with the advice given, with many claiming to find the advice “dated” or “not relevant to their industry”. 43% of those interviewed, think that universities should be doing more to prepare students for the job market.

Whilst many of us believe that a degree will guarantee you a job from the moment you leave university, the results of the survey would suggest otherwise. Whilst 15% of participants secured employment within 3 months of graduating; 55% took between 3 months to a year to land a job, and 21% took over a year to secure a full time employed position. Only 9% managed to secure a job before graduating – this was mainly due to being offered a position, following good performances in work placements.

When applying for jobs, most graduates were shocked with the lack of responses they received from recruiters. 80% said that they do not expect responses from job applications, even when they feel well suited to the job advert – and 92% of people said that they expected to be much more successful in the job market than they actually were after one month of job seeking.

And when reaching interview stage, over half of graduates felt ill-prepared for their interviews, stating that their interviews did not match the format being taught to them by careers advisors.

StandOut CV director Andrew Fennel commented, “Although a university degree is still an excellent addition to anyone’s CV, it seems that many graduates aren’t ready for the challenges they will face in the job market. Even with a perfect education record, you can still miss out on jobs if you don’t know how to sell yourself in your CV, and get your applications noticed by the best employers.”

And on the topic of university careers services he added, “Although many university careers services work very hard and provide a lot of support to students, it’s clear that some of them are relying on dated information, or simply don’t have the experience within their teams to offer relevant advice to graduates. Hopefully we will see some of these services improve, to give graduates that final push into the careers they want.”

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