How is Gen Z career readiness shaped by their backgrounds & what can we do?

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Methodology

2021 sample

79,214 respondents
2,150+ UK institutions

Conducted Oct 2020– May 2021
Age 12 - 25
Capturing gender, ethnicity, sexuality, SE status & disability
Data weighted by gender

a UK case study
Youth unemployment rates in OECD countries (Apr – June 2021)

- **UK**: 13%
- **Spain**: 38%
- **Germany**: 8%
- **EU**: 18%
- **G7**: 11%
- **OECD**: 14%
Impacts of the pandemic on career thinking
“It will be tough to get a good job in the following year...”

- 75% of first year students
- 83% of finalists

61% of students feel their courses provide them with the skills necessary for the labour market.
“I feel like my career options are determined by my social background…”

1 in 2 BAME lower SE students feel their careers are determined by their backgrounds – this is true for the impacts of Covid-19 too.
As a result of Covid-19, are you more likely to...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look for a job that allows flexible working</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for a job that allows working from home</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for a graduate job straight out of uni</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose to live / work nearer my family home</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a postgraduate degree</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start my own business</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go travelling after university</td>
<td>-22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IT & Tech continues to be the most popular sector, followed closely by the Public Sector. Banking and Retail have seen the biggest increase this year. Students are diversifying their sector choices.
UK skills career readiness challenges

- Young people that go to university: <50%
- Graduates per year: ~800,000
- Graduate schemes available: ~46,068
- Mean applications per grad scheme: 60
- Decline in grad recruitment in 2020: ↓12%
- Skills of the future:
  - Numerical & technical skills
  - Resilience
  - Emotional intelligence
What’s happening in schools?
Student aspirations

End-of-school plans – year-on-year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap year</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other plan</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interest in university has grown this year – the highest its been in six years.
Future aspirations (in 10 years time) & causes students care about

**Future aspirations**

- Having a job I enjoy: 85% female, 79% male
- Financial stability: 79% female, 75% male
- Owning a house: 57% female, 52% male
- Being able to travel: 54% female, 42% male
- Owning a car: 42% female, 41% male
- Having a family: 44% female, 39% male
- Making a difference: 42% female, 31% male
- Running my own business: 11% female, 17% male
- Living in another country: 15% female, 12% male

**Causes**

- Social justice: 45% low socio-economic, 51% high socio-economic
- Climate change/sustainability: 30% low socio-economic, 51% high socio-economic
- Healthcare/NHS: 34% low socio-economic, 41% high socio-economic
- Poverty: 30% low socio-economic, 43% high socio-economic
- Education/schools: 31% low socio-economic, 28% high socio-economic
- Economy: 17% low socio-economic, 21% high socio-economic
- Law and order/crime: 17% low socio-economic, 22% high socio-economic
- Politics/government: 11% low socio-economic, 21% high socio-economic
- Other cause: 5% low socio-economic, 5% high socio-economic
IT & Technology popularity by year group and gender

Year group analysis

Year 7/ P7 and younger
Year 8/ S1
Year 9/ S2
Year 10/ S3
Year 11/ S4
Year 12/ S5
Year 13/ S6

Females
Males
Careers in a virtual era
Why haven't you used your careers service?

- I'm too busy: 36%
- I'm unsure about my career prospects: 27%
- The services offered are not relevant to me: 21%
- I'm not aware of these services: 19%
- Thinking about my career prospects makes me anxious: 17%
- I secured graduate employment without it: 7%
- These services are not available: 4%

50% of all students are satisfied with their university careers service.
Are the below ways of engaging better face-to-face or virtually?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Virtual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insight/open days</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers fairs</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with student societies</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career skills workshops</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-1 career advice meeting</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint research with department</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand ambassadors</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lecture</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you have any of the following work experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Low socio-economic</th>
<th>High socio-economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time job</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary/ charity work</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership role</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer insight day/week</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement year</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running my own business</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other work experience</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal vacation scheme</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students from a higher socio-economic background are **18%** more likely to have done an internship than students from a lower socio-economic background.
Virtual working

...have completed a virtual internship

- Total: 28%
- Low socio-economic: 37%
- Black students: 27%

...compared to face-to-face internship

Option | More valuable | Similar value | Not as valuable
--- | --- | --- | ---
Graduate opportunities | 51% | 43% | 7%
Training & development | 53% | 41% | 6%
Networking opportunities | 6% | 41% | 51%
Regular feedback | 40% | 51% | 10%
Advice | 10% | 51% | 40%
Flexible with uni. work | 38% | 44% | 18%
Wellbeing/ support | 38% | 44% | 18%
Technical equipment | 38% | 44% | 18%
Similar duration to office-based | 38% | 44% | 18%
Would not do | 38% | 44% | 18%

What's more important to you in a virtual internship?

- Graduate opportunities: Low socio-economic (42%) vs. High socio-economic (48%)
- Training & development: Low socio-economic (37%) vs. High socio-economic (39%)
- Networking opportunities: Low socio-economic (27%) vs. High socio-economic (36%)
- Regular feedback: Low socio-economic (31%) vs. High socio-economic (34%)
- Advice: Low socio-economic (23%) vs. High socio-economic (24%)
- Flexible with uni. work: Low socio-economic (20%) vs. High socio-economic (15%)
- Wellbeing/ support: Low socio-economic (19%) vs. High socio-economic (15%)
- Technical equipment: Low socio-economic (16%) vs. High socio-economic (14%)
- Similar duration to office-based: Low socio-economic (9%) vs. High socio-economic (12%)
- Would not do: Low socio-economic (4%) vs. High socio-economic (4%)

Option | Low socio-economic | High socio-economic
--- | --- | ---
Graduate opportunities | 42% | 48%
Training & development | 37% | 39%
Networking opportunities | 27% | 36%
Regular feedback | 31% | 34%
Advice | 23% | 24%
Flexible with uni. work | 20% | 15%
Wellbeing/ support | 19% | 15%
Technical equipment | 16% | 14%
Similar duration to office-based | 9% | 12%
Would not do | 4% | 4%
Employer priorities
Preferred working environment

- **Intellectually challenged**: 45% (Male), 44% (Female)
- **Creative or innovative**: 37% (Male), 37% (Female)
- **Serving a greater good**: 43% (Male), 31% (Female)
- **Structured role in a big company**: 31% (Male), 31% (Female)
- **International career**: 29% (Male), 29% (Female)
- **Rotational programme**: 22% (Male), 25% (Female)
- **Technical or functional expert**: 8% (Male), 21% (Female)
- **Leader or manager of people**: 11% (Male), 16% (Female)
- **Autonomous or independent**: 13% (Male), 15% (Female)
- **NOT have a desk job**: 12% (Male), 15% (Female)
- **Start own business**: 9% (Male), 6% (Female)

**Females** are more focused on **serving a greater good** & less on becoming a **technical expert** or a **leader/manager**.
Skills confidence & support required
What are the skills you’re most confident in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Low socio-economic</th>
<th>High socio-economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to detail</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative/ Self-driven</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Data Skills</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Awareness</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What support do you expect from your graduate employers?

- Finding a mentor/buddy: 55% (White), 49% (BAME)
- Relocation support: 36% (White), 33% (BAME)
- Remote working: 34% (White), 29% (BAME)
- Financial advice: 33% (White), 24% (BAME)
- Support with mental wellbeing: 33% (White), 33% (BAME)
- Help to make new friends: 24% (White), 24% (BAME)
- Support with physical wellbeing: 17% (White), 12% (BAME)
- No support: 3% (White), 6% (BAME)
- Other support: 2% (White), 2% (BAME)

BAME students need more support with remote working, financial advice as well as finding a mentor.
University: The Best Time of Our Lives?
A call to action to address the declining mental health of UK students
Key takeaways

i EDUCATE STUDENTS on the variety of sectors & opportunities available i ENGAGE STUDENTS in career development & career inequality early in the process i USE VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE to increase opportunities for minority groups & females i COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING i USE RESEARCH & DATA TO ADDRESS INEQUALITIES
Thank you