

A photograph of three young women sitting at a desk in a computer lab. They are all looking intently at a computer monitor on the left. The woman in the foreground has long, wavy blonde hair and is wearing a light-colored top. The woman in the middle has long, straight brown hair and is wearing a light pink top. The woman in the background has long, straight dark hair and is wearing a teal top. She is pointing at the monitor with her right hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing other computer monitors and a bright, well-lit environment.

MAKING EDUCATION WORK:

Preparing Young People for the Workplace

Introduction

About City & Guilds

As a global leader in skills education, the City & Guilds Group helps people get into a job, progress on the job, and move onto the next job. To do so, City & Guilds provides qualifications and learning materials for vocational training courses around the world.

About this research

This research has been conducted by City & Guilds to understand employers' experiences of hiring and working with young people in Britain, and their perspectives on how to train the workforce of the future.

The research shows that in the UK, employers recognise young people are poorly prepared for work and expect work experience from new starters to try and remedy a skills gap.

However the findings also show that businesses, the education system, and policy makers are not doing enough to give young people opportunities to engage with the world of work whilst they are at school or college. Collaborative, on-the-job training opportunities hold real potential to promote engagement between young people and employers, and to fill the skills gap observed by employers as a result.

On behalf of City & Guilds, Edelman Berland conducted online interviews with 1005 Employers in the UK from small, medium and large organisations. The survey was run in September-October 2013.

Employers surveyed came from a diverse range of industry sectors including engineering, manufacturing, digital and health and social care. All have responsibility for recruiting in their organisations.



Young people are unprepared for today's work environment

Employers are largely concerned that young people are less equipped for the workplace compared to five years ago. They believe that young people's **employment expectations are too high (61%)** and that young people **do not understand what employers are looking for** in their new recruits, so many don't get past the interview stage (62%). They are also concerned that youth unemployment is so high because young people **are not prepared for or don't have the right attitude for the workplace (59%)**.

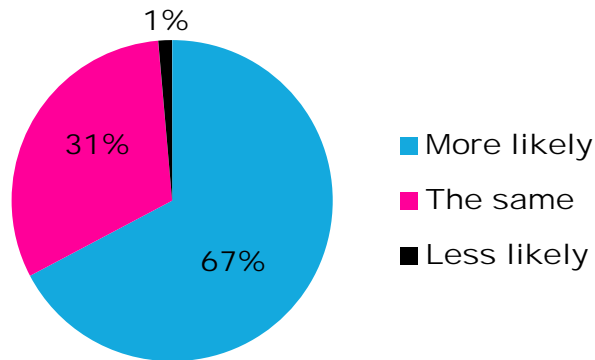
Employers worry that young people are leaving education without the right skills because the education system is **too focused on academia (49%)** and **does not meet the needs of businesses (47%)**.

Over half of employers **(58%) believe their sector is facing a skills shortage**. Employers who work in IT, Digital & Information Services (74%) and Engineering & Manufacturing (72%) are most likely to perceive a skills shortage in their sector.



Employers value work experience in young recruits

More likely to hire someone with work experience?



Employers understand the value of getting the right people for the job, and **over three quarters (78%) agree that relevant work experience is essential** to ensure young people are ready for work.

Two thirds (67%) would be more likely to hire a young person with work experience over someone with none, because those with work experience are seen as having a **better understanding of the work environment (77%)** and a **better attitude towards work (70%)**.

For **56% of employers work experience has become central to their recruitment strategy**, and **50% have given a full time job to someone they've taken on for work experience** – a figure that increases to 62% in Transport & Logistics and 58% in Retail & Sales. This compares to **only 28% of employers who have taken someone on following a graduate scheme**.

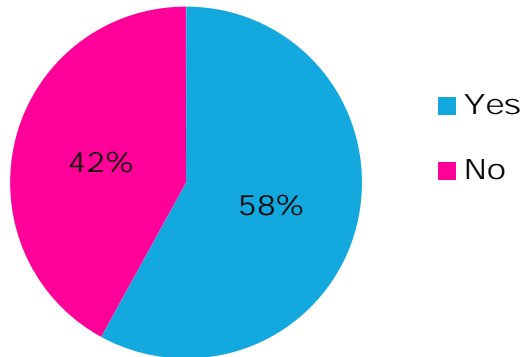
Nearly six in ten employers (58%) **believe that the 'right work attitude' comes from work experience**, while only 33% believe it is from school/college and even fewer respondents think it's taught at university (13%).

Those with work experience are seen as more employable by employers because...

They understand the work environment better and how to conduct themselves in it	77%
They have a better attitude towards work and learning on the job	70%
They have a better understanding of my industry / know what they're getting themselves into	66%
They know how to communicate effectively in the workplace	48%
They are able to manage their time more effectively	37%

However companies are not offering young people access to on-the-job experience ...

Does your company work with your local schools or colleges to actively recruit young people?



Seven in ten employers (71%) **agree that structured work experience should be mandatory** for all 16-18 year olds, but four in ten (42%) **say their company does not work with local schools or colleges** to actively recruit young people.

- Those working in IT, Digital & Information Services are most likely to work with local schools (76%), while those in Hospitality & Tourism and Health, Social Care & Charity work are least likely (45% & 46% respectively)

Those companies who are working with local schools and colleges are using workplace visits (54%), work placements of up to three months (47%), and visits to schools/colleges (44%) to attract young people to their sectors.

- Businesses in Engineering & Manufacturing are the most likely to offer 3-12 month internships versus Media & Creative Arts employers who are the least likely (57% vs. 39% respectively)
- Accountancy, Banking & Finance businesses are most likely to run mentor programmes for young people versus Health, Social Care & Charity work and Public Sector employers who are least likely (43% vs. 23% & 23% respectively)

A lack of support may be stopping companies from engaging with young people **as almost two thirds (60%) of employers told us they would value guidelines and support to help set up work experience.**

... and the education system is not seen to educate young people for the workplace

Young people are leaving education without the right skills because...

The education system is too focused on academia	49%
The current education system does not meet the needs of businesses	47%
People in the UK don't have the same work ethic	43%
Education systems in other countries provide a broader range of skills which are more relevant to business needs	36%
Other countries place more emphasis on skills/vocational education	30%
Other	2%
None of the above	9%

Many employers feel the current education system is not properly preparing young people for the world of work, and view degree courses as increasingly less relevant.

- Nearly half (**49%**) **believe young people are leaving education without the right skills** because the education system is too focused on academia
- **55% would hire someone without a degree versus only 23% who wouldn't**
- Over half (55%) agree that young people who have taken a vocational route are better equipped for the workplace than those with an academic qualification, while only 10% disagree

And strong core skills (numeracy, literacy and communications skills) and previous work experience are more valued in a potential candidate than academic qualifications (49% & 37% vs. 34%)

- Businesses in Teaching & Education place even more value on previous work experience (52% vs. 37% overall)

As a result, companies have mixed levels of confidence about their ability to find future employees within the UK.

- **33% think their company will need to look abroad** for skilled staff, or outsource parts of their business in the future
- Six in ten of those who are sure they will need to look abroad or outsource (**61%**) **believe this is because young people in the UK are leaving education without the right skills**

A collaborative approach to on-the-job training is key to preparing young people for work

Businesses want to be more involved in helping young people develop their skills because **they see the positive impact young people have** on their organisations. As a result of having young people involved, respondents have noticed changes or improvements to staff happiness (42%) and workplace training programmes (40%).

Young people are having the biggest impact on IT, Digital & Information Services, where they are positively affecting new product development (32% vs. 20% overall), and marketing strategy (32% vs. 19% overall) among others.

Over half of employers (**55%**) **would like to be more involved in qualification creation** to ensure they meet the needs of their business, and nearly half (**49%**) **would like to be more involved in the design of the UK curriculum**. They feel that interacting with young people helps them to **create a better skilled workforce** (52%), and three in ten (30%) think that young people are leaving education without the right skills because **other countries place more emphasis on skills/vocational education**.

Over three quarters (79%) of employers believe new employees would benefit from having a workplace mentor to them develop as employees.

Vocational training combined with on-the-job experience represents an opportunity for young people to gain the **skills and competencies** necessary for them to succeed in today's workplace while giving employers the opportunity to help shape their future workforce.

THANK YOU

