

<p>Which person:</p> <p>stopped work after a short time? 1</p> <p>has a full-time temporary job? 2</p> <p>had to do something unwillingly because of a poor financial situation? 3</p> <p>....</p> <p>misses friends on the course? 4 5</p> <p>has not left university yet? 6</p> <p>finds an alternative to a job with a salary? 7</p> <p>feels confident about finding a job? 8</p> <p>found it difficult to get on with colleagues? 9</p>	<p>A Matthew Bashford</p> <p>B Mike Hale</p> <p>C Pete Fulford</p> <p>D Kelly Moore</p> <p>E Rebecca Jones</p>
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Rites of passage

Welcome to the world of work! How do students make the transition from campus to career?

HERE are aspects of student life that most graduates will happily leave behind; not many will miss writing essays at two in the morning, or cramming for exams. But for some students the only thing more daunting than doing a degree is finishing one. "Students have it easy" - it's one of those irritating things that people say. It's even more irritating when they turn out to be right.

Giving up student status means renouncing the laid-back lifestyle and three-month summer holidays. Instead, there is a soul-destroying search for work to look forward to. So are this year's graduates ready for the transition?

Matthew Bashford graduated a year ago from the University of Humberside with a degree in Business Studies. "It's awful," he says. "It makes you want to go back and be a student again. You find it difficult to get work in the first place, and when you do, it's menial stuff and the office politics are a nightmare -it's not easy to make friends:' On top of that, full-time employment has not brought the deluge of cash Matthew expected. "After the increase in rent, bills, and income tax, I was better off as a student than I am now in terms of disposable income," he says. He is still seeking a permanent position.

For others, it is not only finding the job that is a problem, but also accepting the responsibility that goes with it. Mike Hale left Hertfordshire University with a law and economics degree. Lack of money meant he was forced back

home which felt "like a regression", and he found it hard to adjust to the nine-to-five routine. "The thing is," he says, "college is so free and easy that even the thought of doing 40 hours a week is a bit intimidating. But you can't fight it, you've got to earn money. You have to become part of the system.'

After working for nine months as a guitar technician, Mike had saved enough money to go travelling, an increasingly common choice for college leavers. But those who take the backpacking route have to start at the bottom of the career ladder when they return. Mike solved this problem by starting his own business.

Another common problem is that leaving university means losing the structure that a degree course provides. Pete Fulford, who left Coventry University with a BSc in industrial project design two years ago, says, "I got a bit depressed because there was a lot of camaraderie on my course, we were a very close-knit group. There was this institution that I was a part of, and then it was gone. It left a kind of void.'

A year after leaving Brighton with a degree in design history, Kelly Moore was going through similar emotions. She said, "Going to lectures, being part of the system, it gives you a sense of security, and you lose that when you leave."

Not all students are daunted by the rite of passage from university to the jobs market. Rebecca Jones, a student of French and German from Liverpool University, is looking forward to leaving college and earning some money. She will take "any job going" to pay off her debts, although long-term career plans are vague. She mentions returning to France, where she spent part of her degree, and that she would be disappointed if she didn't use her language skills. "You don't know what it's going to be like until you get there, do you?"

Maybe not, but it is possible to plan. Those who have coped best are those who have thought about the difficulties they might face and are open to the diverse range of opportunities that.

"I knew it was going to be hard," says Kelly, "but I had a game plan. I wanted to get a job that would help me pay off my debts, and I started applying as soon as I finished my course. I was offered a job as a personnel manager on the day I graduated. It certainly wasn't my ideal position, but it was an absolutely brilliant experience. It taught me self-discipline, how to organise myself and a great deal about the workplace. My advice is, don't just hope that something will come along, start planning what you're going to do as early as possible. It makes it so much easier."