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# **Choices and Transitions: A Study of the Graduate Labour Market in the South West**

S Perryman  
E Pollard  
J Hillage  
L Barber

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The Higher Education Regional Development Association – South West  
Sterling House  
Dix's Field  
Exeter EX1 1QA

Tel. + 44 (0) 1392 229579

Fax. + 44 (0) 1392 229580

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IES aims to help bring about sustainable improvements in employment policy and human resource management. IES achieves this by increasing the understanding and improving the practice of key decision makers in policy bodies and employing organisations.

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## Foreword

The publication of *Choices and Transitions; a Study of the Graduate Labour Market in the South West* provides for the first time a detailed analysis of factors influencing graduates and their employment in the region.

The South West needs sustainable economic growth, and that requires a healthy knowledge-based labour market. Graduates, with their high skills levels and their inclination to learn throughout their careers, are critical to business competitiveness, and the future prosperity of our companies and the region as a whole. Increasing the number of graduates employed in the South West will underpin regional strategies for innovation and enterprise.

We have to work with our partners and with business and industry to make sure that the region has the graduates it needs, and that businesses understand how graduate employment can increase competitiveness and profitability.

Graduate labour demand has changed as a result of economic restructuring, changes in technology and global competition. New industries require new skills; more competitive businesses require more highly-educated managers and administrators; so graduates must continue to learn throughout their lives to develop the skills and knowledge needed.

All the indicators point to the importance of attracting, retaining and developing graduates. This is why HERDA-SW and the South West RDA are working together and with other partners to implement the recommendations from this research, to improve the levels of graduate retention for the benefit of the region's businesses and for the benefit of the wider economy of the South West.



**Professor Eric Thomas**  
Chair, HERDA-SW  
Vice-Chancellor University of Bristol



**Juliet Willams**  
Chairman, South West of England  
Regional Development Agency

# Executive Summary

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In March 2002 HERDA-SW in association with SWRDA commissioned IES to conduct a study to inform regional efforts to retain and recruit graduates for the benefits of the South West economy.

The study involved three main strands:

- A detailed analysis of relevant secondary datasets *eg* from UCAS, HESA and the LFS, which provide information on student and graduate flows through the South West and into the labour market.
- A postal survey of over 4,000 final year students in South West HEIs about their reasons for studying in the South West and their future employment intentions, supplemented by 40 telephone interviews with survey respondents.
- Telephone interviews with 50 graduates working in the South West plus a survey of almost 300 graduates with a connection to the South West.

At the heart of the study is a typology of students/graduates which distinguishes eight groups depending on whether their home, place of study or place of employment is in the South West (see Table 1). At one end are those we term 'SW Loyals', who come from, study and work in the South West. At the other there are 'Missed Opportunities', *ie* students who come from, study and work in the rest of the UK (who are not the focus of this study).

**Table 1: Typology of graduates' relationship to the South West**

<b>Types of graduates</b>	<b>Where from?</b>	<b>Where studied?</b>	<b>Where job?</b>
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

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Source: IES, 2002

The study shows that around 14 per cent of graduates fall into the top seven groups in Table 1, *ie* have some association with the South West. The largest single group are the Passers Through, around 26 per cent of graduates connected to the South West. The other main groups are Lost SW Students (22 per cent), SW Loyals (15 per cent) and Returners (15 per cent).

## Main messages

The main messages that emerge from the study are summarised below:

- **The South West is:**
  - **a net exporter of students.** Most people from the South West who enter higher education study outside the region
  - **a net exporter of graduates.** Most students who study in the South West end up working outside the region, particularly as time passes
  - **a nice place to study.** South West students are generally very satisfied with their experience of higher education
  - **a nice place to live.** Most students from the South West or who go there to study think it is a nice place to live
  - **perceived to be not a good place to work.** Students in the South West feel that the job opportunities, outside areas such as the public service sector, and locations nearer the South East and the Midlands, are limited. While some find satisfactory employment in the South West, most either leave straight after graduation or hang around for a while in temporary employment, before heading off for the brighter prospects and better 'opportunities' in London and elsewhere. Lost SW Graduates, who come from and studied in the South West but work elsewhere have better quality jobs than those SW students who stay in the region. Although some of the negative views of the South West are misplaced, for instance the quality of graduate jobs is around the regional average, real graduate earnings do appear to be relatively low.
- **Demand for graduates is important.** The movement of graduates out of the region and the reasons they give for going suggest that it is the lack adequate job opportunities that are driving many away. Many would prefer to stay, but feel they have to go for career reasons. There is more research that could be done to identify the true extent of employer demand for graduates.
- **Domestic students are the key source of supply.** The group we call SW Loyals forms the largest group of SW graduates working in the region. They are committed to stay for various reasons and form the core supply. However,

- **... key employers look outside.** Most employers in the region's priority sectors prefer to import graduates from outside the region. This is partly because SW Loyals study subjects that are more suited to other occupations and sectors.
- **Home is where the heart is.** While a number of people from the South West go elsewhere to study, as in most regions, many return. Our group of graduate Returners outnumbers our Incomers by two to one. While many who come to study from outside the region stay for a while, they tend to drift away – back home or to better job prospects elsewhere. Many Returners seem particularly keen to come back, taking relatively low quality jobs so to do.
- **It's worst in the West.** There are fewer graduate opportunities the further West you travel. In the far South West, *ie* Cornwall and Devon opportunities tend to be for older and more local graduates, whereas in the near South West, *eg* in the area around Bristol appears to offer more higher level job opportunities.
- **Students have a fairly realistic view of the labour market.** Students expectations of their employment and salary prospects seem reasonably grounded in reality, although they may not be aware of the full range of job opportunities available. Many take a medium-term view of their career prospects and would be happy to work in smaller and medium sized businesses – as long as the job prospects looked interesting.

The rest of this summary highlights the main findings of the study in more detail, beginning by looking at students who study in the South West before following their path through to entering the labour market and building a graduate career.

## Students in the South West

### South West students consider location important

People applying to full-time courses at university or college seriously consider the 'geography' of their choices. Although most emphasis is put on the availability of a subject of interest, they are also very interested in the location of the university/college and their employment prospects on graduation. Location is particularly important for part-time students, as is the flexibility of distance study for Open University students. Older students and those originally from the South West are particularly sensitive to the location of institutions. However, a relatively low proportion of potential students from the South West make applications to study in their home region, on a full-time basis, compared with students from other regions. The South East, Wales, West Midlands and London attract many applications from South Westerners. However:

- mature applicants from the South West favour their home region for full-time courses, more so than younger applicants and those from 'professional' families
- applicants are generally unwilling to move very far to study, even for a full-time course. Institutions in neighbouring regions are popular choices, eg the South West is a popular place to study among full-time South Eastern applicants.

### **The region is a net exporter of full-time students**

Over a third of full-time students from the South West study in their home region – a relatively low proportion in comparison with many other regions. Students from Devon, Cornwall and West of England appear to be more tied to the South West than those in counties on the border with other regions. Most part-time students from the South West study in their home region, in line with most other regions. In fact, few part-time students choose universities or colleges outside of their sub-region.

### **South West students follow the national profile**

Full-time students in South West institutions are fairly typical of national students, except in their ethnic profile, which matches the local population. Part-time and Open University students in the South West are predominantly female and more mature. Many part-time students study subjects allied to medicine. Subject choice is highly gendered among both full and part-time students.

South West universities with a national recruitment focus tend to take more male and younger students than do local recruiters. Local recruiters tend to have more mature and more part-time students.

Most full-time students have what appears to be an uninterrupted educational progression. Two-thirds of full-time students are recruited straight from schools or sixth form colleges. However the majority of part-time and Open University students were in work immediately before they began their course.

### **The South West is a good place to study**

The South West offers a favourable environment for higher education – the majority of people leaving South West institutions rated their higher education experiences positively, and were particularly complimentary about their choice of course and the local environment. Full-time students also viewed the social life and facilities as meritorious, however there are indications that they may need greater support in building a career than part-time and Open University students. Interestingly, those planning to leave the region on graduation were slightly more positive about their study experiences than those planning

to stay, suggesting a good experience of HE may not be sufficient to keep people in the region for a career.

## **Students' expectations of the labour market**

### **Students expect a bumpy ride ...**

Our leavers survey found that in the few months after finishing studies those who had studied full-time (particularly younger students) tended to expect low paid temporary 'stop gap' work in sales and administration type jobs in the retail, leisure and tourism, food and drink, and financial and business services. However, three years after finishing their studies, the vast majority of leavers expect to be in permanent professional posts.

### **... but have generally realistic salary expectations**

The average (median) expected salary, amongst full-time leavers expecting to work immediately after graduation, was £12,500 which reflects the high expectation of temporary work. The average anticipated salary for those expecting permanent work was £16,000 which is lower than many graduates actually receive in the national labour market. Anticipated salaries amongst those who had studied part-time or with the Open University were higher still, reflecting their probable greater labour market experience and career continuity. Full-time leavers anticipated their average salary would increase to £22,000 in three years time. This reflects the move towards permanent work rather than anticipated dramatic pay rises.

Initial salary expectations were lowest among younger students, females, those expecting to stay in the region and those expecting to work in retail sales and administrative positions. Highest salaries were expected among older students, males, those expecting to leave the South West (especially those headed towards London and the South East) and those expecting to work in ICT and engineering.

### **Self-employment only of interest to mature students**

There was little interest in self-employment initially (although the numbers grow after three years in the labour market), except for a few anticipating working as ICT and creative professionals. Self-employment was more popular amongst those with greater labour market experience *eg* older students and those who had studied part-time or with the OU.

## **Expected destination varies with age and gender**

Some 30 per cent of leavers initially expect to work in the SWRDA priority sectors – rising to 38 per cent after three years (although not all of these expect to work in the South West). Anticipated industry and occupation varied by gender and age and, critically, subject choice (which in turn is related to gender and age). Thus:

- Women were more likely to expect to work as health and social welfare, teaching and academic professionals and to work in the public sector. They were also more likely to have taken courses in subjects related to health, education and medicine.
- Men were more likely to expect to work as business, finance and legal, ICT, and engineering professionals and to work in engineering and ICT industries. They were also more likely to have taken courses in the fields of engineering and technology, maths, statistics and IT.
- Younger students were more likely to expect to work in business, finance, legal, marketing, sales, PR and advertising professions; and in the financial and business services sector. They were also more likely to have followed courses in languages, business and administrative studies.
- Older students were more likely to expect to work in health and social welfare, teaching and academic, creative and engineering professions; and in the public, engineering, and creative sectors and were relatively more likely to have studied health, humanities, engineering, technology, creative arts and education subjects.

## **South West students expect to stay only for a while**

In the first few months after completing courses many students from South West HEIs (around half) intend to remain in the region. While this leads to a short-term net increase in the number of individuals with high level skills, the gain is short-lived as after three years, most of these students (two-thirds) expect to leave, leading to a net fall. While many South West graduates have an expectation to stay in the South West in the short term, they do not intend to stay in the longer run.

Propensity to stay in the region after studies, in the short and longer term, is strongly affected by home region. Staying in the region was much more common amongst those originally from the South West. It is also more common amongst female, and older students, and amongst those studying at institutions with a relatively local market – all linked to the tendency to have lived in the South West before their studies.

## **Why stay?**

The most common reasons given for staying in the region were that individuals had made their home/life there (particularly common amongst those who already lived in the region – ‘SW Loyals’), and the quality of life/environment and the job and career opportunities that the region offers (particularly common amongst those who moved into the region to study – ‘Incomers’).

## **Why go?**

Generally students in their final year of higher education in the South West thought the region was a good place to study, but not a good place to work. The natural environment was viewed positively, but transport links were felt to be poor and living costs high and there was felt to be relatively few graduate job opportunities.

Intending to leave the South West was more common amongst younger students, those who had lived outside of the region prior to their studies and those who had studied at institutions with a higher national profile. The most popular destination, for those expecting to leave the South West, was London and the South East followed (at least in the short-term) by the Midlands and Wales. The most common reasons given for leaving the South West were the lack of job and career opportunities, and the (low) salaries offered (particularly amongst those who lived in the region before their studies – Lost SW Graduates); and also to return home (particularly those originally from outside of the region – ‘Passers Through’). Few students expected to go overseas especially immediately after graduation.

## **Making the transition**

Students may take a range of actions to secure a foothold in the labour market. Many seek to improve their employability before entry and many also take a temporary job as a first measure.

### **Improving their employability**

The most common actions involve obtaining work experience *ie* working part time whilst studying full time. Indeed, work experience was regarded as particularly valuable by graduates in the labour market who felt that a degree alone was not enough to secure graduate level employment. Having work related skills and work experience of the kind valued by employers was strongly emphasised by graduate interviewees. Graduates indicated that employability becomes more important to individuals towards the end of their studies, when they turn their attentions to job search.

## **Taking a stop-gap job**

Interviews with graduates indicate that returning home after graduation is very common. Many find themselves in temporary 'stop gap' work, similar to their term time work experience. This gives them the time to consider their options and helps to reduce their student debt. However data from the graduate survey shows that those in temporary work may be in danger of becoming trapped in unsuitable temporary jobs and that this group may need greater support. While on average graduates applied for two jobs each, those in temporary work were trying harder to gain work (making more applications) than those in permanent work, and were having less success. This was a particular problem for those from South West institutions.

## **What labour market entrants want in an employer**

Students coming to the end of their studies and turning their attentions to the labour market, looked for employers who would offer interesting and challenging work and training and development opportunities. So too did graduates with more direct experience of the labour market. Location of employment was important to some students, especially those who had studied part time or with the Open University, and both older and female students.

Size of employer was considered to be relatively unimportant by students, and even less important by graduates. However, when asked for a preference, students, particularly those expecting temporary work, reported that they would prefer to work in a smaller company than a larger one. Looking ahead three years, students were more likely to prefer medium to large organisations. This may indicate that new graduates prefer to enter the labour market via small organisations. Indeed those with greater labour market experience were more likely to prefer to work in a larger organisation.

## **Do South West employers want local graduates?**

Graduates in our survey generally wanted to work in the South West. However those who had studied at South West HEIs were relatively less successful in gaining permanent work in the region than those from outside. This prompts the question: are South West graduates perhaps less attractive to South West employers? The most successful group at getting work in the region were those who were originally from the South West but had studied elsewhere, returning to the region to work (Returners). This group averaged at one job offer to every three applications. Returners and SW Loyals seemed to be more determined to find work in the South West than any other groups.

## **Are South West jobs sufficiently visible?**

National data collected by the CSU show that the South West is in a relatively similar position to other regions of the UK, with the exception of London and the South East. Five per cent of CSU vacancies were for positions in the South West, salaries were only a little behind those of some other regions, and graduates in the South West are as likely to find employment as those from other regions. Perhaps the issue here is the 'visibility' of career options in the South West. The key areas of work on offer in the region are in engineering and technology services, finance, and information technology jobs.

## **Entering the labour market**

Almost 10,000 new graduates found work in the South West at the beginning of 2001: two-thirds of these had lived in the South West prior to their studies; and half of these had studied in the region's higher education institutions. A substantial proportion (over half) were working in the West of England (*eg* Bath and Bristol) or Devon (which includes Plymouth).

However more of those working in the region had both previously lived in the region and studied in the region (SW Loyals) than had returned to their home after studying elsewhere (Returners). Up to a quarter of new graduates who come from outside the region to study, stay and find work.

Few new graduates, less than one per cent, enter self-employment and a fifth continue studying.

## **South West exports new graduates**

Despite the inflow of new graduates into the region, the South West is a net exporter of graduates as it loses more individuals with high level skills than it gains. Almost a quarter of newly qualified graduates who were originally from the South West find jobs in London and the South East.

## **A third of graduates are under-employed**

Using data from our graduate survey, up to one third of new graduates with a connection to the South West (*ie* people who either studied in or came from the region) are underemployed. It would seem that those leaving the region are better off, in terms of gaining graduate level work, than those staying or returning to the region. However, there was some indication from our interviews that graduates make strategic moves via less valuable roles in order to obtain what they would class as a 'real graduate job'.

## **Job prospects get worse as you go West**

Each sub-region within the South West has its own characteristics in terms of the new graduates finding work. For example, Cornwall and Devon tend to provide opportunities for older and more local graduates. In the east of the region, the 'West of England' (formerly known as Avon) offers more higher level occupations.

## **Key employers prioritise imported graduates**

Looking at sectors identified by the region as priorities, South West employers in these sectors (particularly in the biotechnology sector) would appear to import more new graduates than they are hiring from local institutions. Not all the priority sectors offer good quality graduate jobs. The food and drink, and the leisure and tourism sectors are less likely to have higher level employment. Employment terms for new graduates in the creative industries tend to be less secure and more short-term than for graduates in other sectors.

# **Graduates in the South West labour market**

## **The South West imports graduate skills**

The South West is marginally a net importer of graduate skills and knowledge – there are slightly more graduates who work in the region but live outside, than there are graduates who live in the region and work outside. More graduates live in the South West than work in the region. Around 15 per cent of workers in the South West have a degree, below the UK average. The South West has a relatively mature graduate population, no other region has a lower proportion of its graduate residents who are of working age as a large proportion of them are in early retirement. Graduate unemployment in the South West and neighbouring regions is low. Graduates are not evenly spread across the sub-regions, but are concentrated in the same, largely urban, locations as the South West's universities and colleges.

## **Graduates in priority sectors**

Around 100,000 graduates in the South West work in the priority economic sectors. Some sectors, *eg* creative industries, are more 'graduate rich' than others, and the region's Advanced Engineering and Marine industries are the largest in the UK. However around half of recent graduates working in these sectors do not expect to remain in the South West beyond the short term.

## **Quality of graduate jobs is average**

Overall, the quality of graduate employment in the region is comparable in most respects to that in other regions. Most graduates in the region have permanent contracts for higher level jobs, and around half have received work-related training and development in the last three months.

Graduates in the South West earn around 91 per cent of the UK average. Earnings for recent graduates in the South West are more favourable than in many other regions, but are still £100 a week behind those in London. Recent graduates have high expectations of salary growth. Salary progression may be faster in the South West than in London or the South East, despite starting salaries being lower. Career progression in the South West may also be faster than in many other regions. Again, recent graduates have high expectations of their career progress.

## **Career plans generally on track**

One year after graduating, most graduates agree that their career plans are on track, and that their current activity forms part of their career plan, though they have not found it easy to find a job which matches their skills and abilities. There is a great deal of difference between the attitudes of those who have made a good start in their careers, when compared to people caught in temporary contracts in non-graduate type work. The majority would be prepared to relocate to improve their career prospects – even SW Loyals. Younger graduates and men are the most mobile, as are people who have a history of moving to study or work.

## **Living and working in the South West**

Graduates' opinions about living in the South West do not shift greatly after finishing their degrees, except that they find the cost of living in the South West even more unsatisfactory. Experience of the South West raises its value in graduates' eyes. Few graduates feel that the South West is too far from anywhere.

The relaxed pace of life in the region is a mixed blessing. Different types of graduates place different values on the pace of life – Lost SW students agree the pace of life is less hectic/stressed but leave the area at the first opportunity. Generally, transport links are thought to be unsatisfactory.

## **Strong ties ...**

People originally from the South West feel that they have strong ties to the region, though studying in the region does not seem to engender such a strong attachment.

### ... butter no parsnips

The region offers a good quality of life, but the perceptions of appropriate job opportunities for graduates in the region is a major issue. Many report that their preference is to stay in the South West, but that career opportunities, large employers and good salaries were hard to find.

## Policy implications

The study suggests that the recruitment and retention of graduates to the region would be improved by:

- **Plugging the leaks** through which students and graduates leave the South West – by:
  - encouraging students who currently study outside the region to stay in the South West, perhaps by increasing the provision of courses they opt for, and
  - encouraging more students who study in the region to work there, through better marketing of the opportunities available and offering more work experience and other measures which increase graduates chances of successfully entering the labour market.
- **Increasing the flow** of students into the South West, by:
  - increasing the core supply of domestic students *eg* by extending flexible provision and/or increasing the number of places and courses in subjects of interests to key South West employment sectors, and
  - encouraging more students from the South West who study outside the region to return, by target marketing of job opportunities.
- **Other measures include:**
  - promoting work placements and other measures that improve students' employability
  - raising the profile of local employment opportunities, particularly among smaller and medium-sized workplaces, including demonstrating the value that graduates can bring to smaller enterprises
  - working with SW employers to promote regional opportunities
  - improving the information base of individual HEIs
  - improving local knowledge about employer demand for graduates.



# 1. Introduction

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This report presents the main findings of a study to examine the factors influencing graduate retention and employment in the South West Region of England. In March 2002, the Higher Education Regional Development Association – South West (HERDA-SW) in association with the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to conduct a study to inform regional efforts to retain and recruit graduates for the benefits of the South West economy.

In this opening chapter, we briefly discuss the background to the study in terms of general trends in the graduate labour market and the key characteristics of the South West, before setting out our overall approach and methodology and outlining the structure of the rest of the report.

## 1.1 The graduate labour market

The graduate labour market in the UK is both large and hugely varied. In 2001, over 250,000 students qualified from higher education (HE) institutions with first degrees, and a further 70,000 with other HND or other undergraduate qualifications. The number of graduates continues to rise year by year, albeit at a much slower rate now than in the early to mid 1990s. Around two-thirds of first degree graduates from full-time study, some 120,000, went on to take up a position with an employer in this country in 2001. Most of the remainder went on to postgraduate study or further training (see Barber *et al.*, forthcoming).

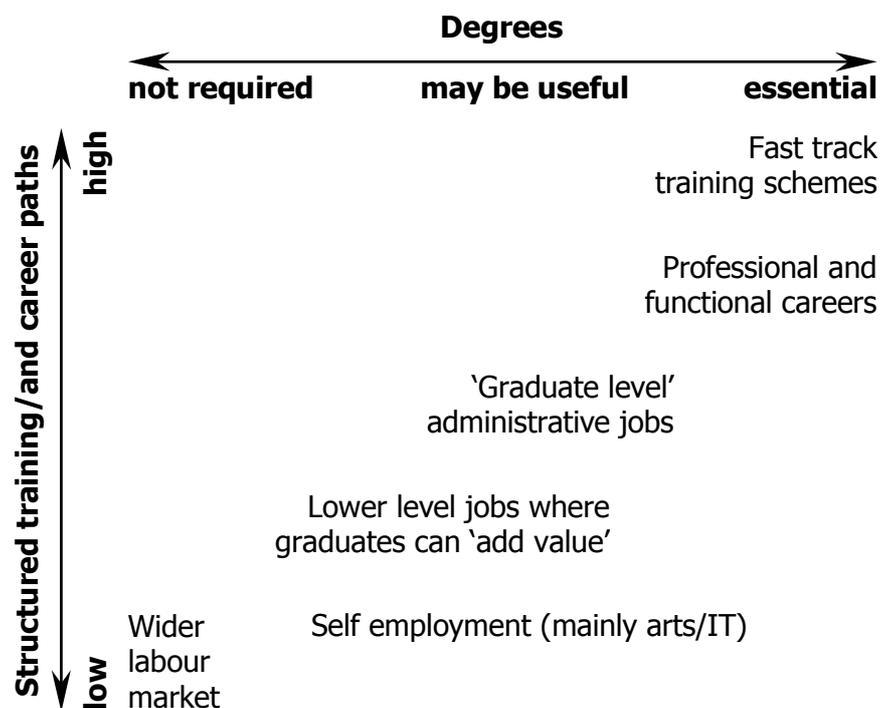
Despite this large and increasing supply, many graduate recruiters, especially large ones seeking high calibre graduates, continue to have difficulties recruiting to meet their needs fully. At the same time, despite low unemployment (around five per cent) there are many graduate job hunters who struggle to obtain satisfactory employment. Demand by employers for the 'best' graduates, and by graduates for the 'best' jobs, remains intense, and is likely to continue that way. However, this demand is focused on a relatively small part of the graduate market. The vast majority of graduates are sought for, and enter, a wide range of jobs and employment

sectors, some taking new jobs or jobs which may not have been filled by newly qualified graduates previously.

This large and broad graduate market is very diverse, in many ways. New graduates include a growing proportion of women (now over 50 per cent) and also a growing proportion of ethnic minorities (over 15 per cent). The student intake draws from a wider pool: over a third of young people (18/19 years) now go on to HE study, twice the proportion of 15 years ago, but they still come predominantly from the higher social class/income groups (see Connor *et al.*, 2001b). Over half of all first year undergraduates are aged over 21 years (even higher among some ethnic minority groups); and one-third of all first year students now take part-time courses (the majority older students). On the demand side, we have seen an increasing range of graduate destinations, some requiring degree qualifications more than others. Figure 1.1 models some of the most common types of graduate opportunities.

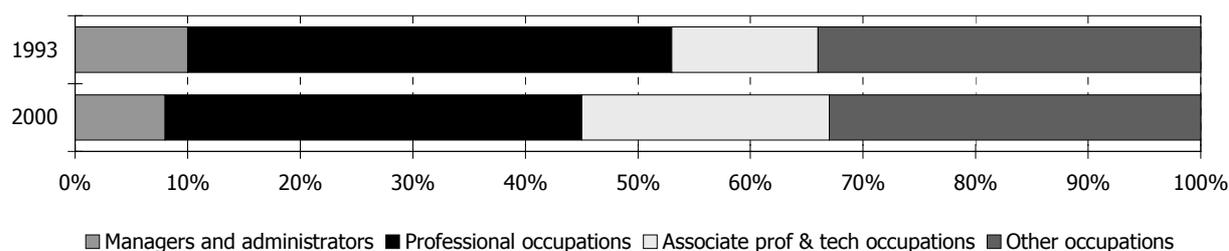
Many traditional graduate entry jobs are becoming incorporated into the wider recruitment market. This is supported by analysis of new (*ie* recently qualified) graduates in the Labour Force Survey (LFS), nine months after graduation. It shows that the number of new graduates rose considerably between 1993 and 2000, but the proportion found in managerial or professional level occupations declined (Figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.1: Model of new graduate destinations**



Source: IES, 2000

**Figure 1.2: Occupations of new graduates, nine months after graduation**



Source: IES 2001/Labour Force Survey, Spring quarters, 1993 and 2000

The coming years are likely to see further fragmentation of the new-graduate labour market.

### 1.1.1 Recent recruitment trends

After several years of growth, the number of vacancies for new graduates among the major recruiters fell in 2001/02 (by around six per cent, see Barber *et al.*, 2002), and there has been some easing of graduate recruitment difficulties in the last year. This was attributed mainly to the current economic climate (especially since September 11th), with overall vacancies for graduates expected to rise in 2002/03. The slowdown in graduate recruitment though has not been general but has been concentrated in IT, software and telecommunications sectors, and also, though to a lesser extent, in accountancy and 'other business services'. In contrast, graduate demand in engineering and construction sectors has remained high and is also high in certain businesses across a number of other sectors (AGR, 2002; IDS, 2002).

Work-relevant skills of new graduates have improved over earlier years' intakes, as evidenced from employers in various surveys (see AGR surveys and recent HEFCE research by Mason and Williams, forthcoming) and also improvements by universities in helping to prepare students for the world of work. But there remains widespread concern that more needs to be done here, by higher education especially to improve the employability of new graduates. The possession of a degree is not simply a passport to a good job. Graduates need to have developed skills and abilities to gain initial employment and to make transitions between jobs and roles, often within the same organisation, to meet new job requirements, and also to manage these career transitions more independently.

Students may have adjusted their intentions slightly to the economic environment, with traditionally sought after jobs becoming less popular, according to research on 13,000 finalists (High Fliers, 2002). Students are still attracted to jobs and employers by similar things as in the past – most of all by good career prospects, including early responsibility, plus the

reputation of an organisation, a good training programmes and a good salary.

Salary levels for new graduates have remained relatively stable, typically rising by four per cent over the last year, according the AGR (May 2002 survey), though salaries offered to graduates remain very competitive between recruiters, especially at the top end of the market. Graduate salaries are predicted to grow slowly next year, though staying ahead of inflation. On the whole, though, advertised salary levels of graduate appointments are very wide ranging, reflecting the diverse market (IDS, 2002).

### **1.1.2 The complexity of graduate career paths**

Though most students start their university courses with high hopes for their future career, for many it can take three or four years to settle into a stable employment pattern (Connor *et al.*, 1997b). Many new graduates experience a mixture of temporary jobs, further study and career jobs over this time period (Elias and Knight, 1999; Connor and Pollard, 1996). The changing profile of higher education, in particular its increasing diversity and broader intake poses a number of challenges for both traditional new-graduate employers, and to organisations which have less experience of recruiting graduates. Among these challenges, employers are faced with finding the recruits they actually want from within a much larger pool, both of new graduates and those who have been in the labour market for a few years.

### **1.1.3 The contribution of HE to competitiveness**

The level of knowledge, skills and experience among the population is one of the main drivers of productivity growth (PIU, 2001). Higher education can contribute to the development of higher level skills, in both technical and managerial areas, thereby potentially enhancing competitiveness at both a national and regional level (MacDonald, 1998).

## **1.2 The South West**

The South West region of England comprises the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire and the former county of Avon which is sometimes referred to as the West of England sub-region (comprising South Gloucestershire, Bath & NE Somerset, North Somerset and Bristol).

It is mixed rural/urban region with major urban centres including Bristol, Bath, Plymouth, Swindon and Bournemouth. It has a population of 4.9 million, which is growing mainly due to net in-migration of both retired people and those of working age. However, the region is a net exporter of people aged 16 to 24.

Almost half the population is in employment. Unemployment is relatively low, except in the far South West and the economy of the region is equally patchy. There are areas of relative prosperity, especially along the Eastern edge of the region as well as areas of urban and rural deprivation. The South West has an average level of skill shortage vacancies (an external labour market issue) and skill gaps (an in-company issue) concentrated mainly in lower skilled occupations but also affecting higher skilled areas (Hillage *et al.*, 2002). For example, 31 per cent of skill gaps in the South West affects managerial and professional occupations and recent research in Devon and Cornwall highlighted the importance of management skill deficits, alongside those in lower skilled occupations (Devon and Cornwall LSC, 2002).

As a whole the region has a diverse economy, with an average level of productivity. The key economic sectors identified by the RDA as being of particular significance in terms of volume and/or growth potential are: food and drink, tourism, creative arts, environmental technologies, biotechnology, marine, advanced engineering/aerospace and ICT.

Another key characteristic of the South West and highlighted in a recent HERDA report is its natural resources in the region in terms of its countryside and coastline. 'The quality of the environment in the South West is increasingly recognised as a significant competitive advantage for this region' (Allen *et al.* 2002).

### **1.2.1 Higher education in the South West**

There are 33 universities and colleges providing higher education courses in the South West (according to UCAS data), under the umbrella of the 14 HERDA member institutions. They are the universities of Bath, Bournemouth, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth and the West of England, plus Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (now known as University of Gloucestershire), Bath Spa University College, The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Dartington and Falmouth Colleges of Art, the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and the College of St Mark and St John, plus the Open University in the South West.

As HEFCE note, the key features of the HE sector in the South West are its health and diversity and it offers effective choice because institutions in the region:

- are varied in size
- have a variety of special interests
- compete with each other in some student markets.

One way to conceptualise the HEIs in the South West is to put them into four main groups:

- the long established universities, (the universities of Bristol, Bath, and Exeter)
- the 'new' universities (the former polytechnics which are now the universities of Bournemouth, Plymouth, and the West of England)
- the former colleges of higher education and teacher training colleges (Bath Spa University College, the College of St Mark and St John, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education/the University of Gloucestershire ), and finally
- the specialist institutions (the Royal Agricultural College, Dartington College of Arts, Falmouth College of Arts, and the Arts Institute, Bournemouth).

The Open University also has a sizeable presence in the South West.

### 1.3 Overall approach to the study

The main focus of this study is on the supply-side, *ie* quantifying and examining the flow of graduates, particularly from HEIs in the South West into the labour market, and in particular into jobs in the South West. At the heart of the study is a typology of students which distinguishes eight groups depending on whether their home, place of study or place of employment is in the South West. Thus at one end of the spectrum there are those we term 'SW Loyals', who come from, study and work in the South West. At the other end there are (a very large) group of 'Missed Opportunities', *ie* students who come from, study and work in the rest of the UK (who are not the focus of this study). The other six groups, who all spend at least some of their time in the South West, are set out in the grid in Table 1.1.

We use this typology or grid throughout the report to help focus our analysis on particular groups of the actual and potential graduate supply to the South West.

### 1.4 Method

The study involved three main strands:

- A detailed analysis of relevant secondary datasets which provide information on student and graduate flows through the South West and into the labour market.
- A survey of over 4,000 third year students in South West HEIs about their reasons for being in the South West and their future employment intentions, supplemented by 40 telephone interviews with survey respondents.
- Telephone interviews with 50 graduates working in the South West, supplemented by a survey of almost 300 South West graduates.

In addition, we conducted around ten background informant interviews with representatives from South West HEIs, employer organisations and labour market intermediaries. We also examined data provided by individual HEIs, *eg* about graduate destinations and the South West Observatory and others about the South West Labour Market and economy.

Below we discuss these three main methods used in more detail. A fuller consideration of the methodology adopted is contained in Appendices 3, 4 and 5.

### 1.4.1 Secondary data analysis

An important element of the study involved examination of three main datasets:

- Data from UCAS, the University and Colleges Admission Service about applicants to higher education.
- Data from HESA – the Higher Education Statistics Agency about students in higher education and their destinations six months after leaving, and
- Data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) – a national survey of individuals which covers key aspects of their education and employment history and current behaviour.

Other data sources examined include the New Earnings Survey, the Employers Skill Survey and Careers Service Unit (CSU) data on graduate salaries and vacancies.

Analysis of these data enable us to quantify and map the flows of students into and through the South West and their behaviour at key decision points, namely choice of university or college, choices on graduation, and longer term employment outcomes.

**Table 1.1: Typology of students'/graduates' relationship to the South West**

<b>Types of 'student'</b>	<b>Where from?</b>	<b>Where studied?</b>	<b>Where job?</b>
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

*Source: IES, 2002*

### **1.4.2 Student survey and interviews**

A key part of the study was a survey of students in their final year at HEIs in the South West. We wanted to study the attitudes towards, and opinions of, the labour market from those who are poised to enter it after completing their higher education studies. Examining the results from these 'students' is important because it allows us to determine the links between study choices, labour market expectations and actual labour market experiences.

We sent out some 9,375 questionnaires to a sample of students in the final year drawn from 14 member institutions of HERDA-SW distributed roughly in proportion to the number of students. We received a total 4,085 useable responses, an overall response rate of 44 per cent, varying between 64 per cent to 19 per cent by institution (see Appendix 4).

In presenting the data we have distinguished between three main groups:

- full-time students
- part-time students, and
- students at the Open University.

Throughout the report this survey is referred to as the 'leavers' survey, as it concerns students about to leave higher education and enter the labour market.

We have weighted the survey results for full-time students to ensure they reflect the main characteristics of all such students in the South West as measured by HESA data. Full details of the weighting methodology are set out in Appendix 4. The data presented in this report are therefore fully representative of South West full-time students as a whole. Data on part-time students and from the Open University may not be representative of all such students in the South West, but do represent a good cross-section.

More detailed follow-up interviews were also conducted with 40 of the survey respondents.

### **1.4.3 Graduate interviews and survey**

To understand the perspective of students after they had graduated we conducted 50 interviews with graduates working in the South West. The interview sample was partly provided by participant HEIs and also from a small survey we undertook for a study of students from the South West who had applied to higher education and/or students who had gone to university in the South West. The sample for the survey was generated from a previous study conducted by IES (Connor *et al.*, 2001a). We

received 291 responses at a response rate of 56 per cent (see Appendix 5 for more details).

This survey is referred to throughout the report as the ‘**graduates**’ survey.

## **1.5 Structure of the report**

The report is structured around the path that students take into and through higher education and onward to the labour market. At each point we seek to differentiate the key groups in our typology (Table 1.1). Thus we begin by examining student flows and the pattern of applications and the profile of students in and from the South West (Chapter Two). This is of interest for two reasons: firstly students in and from the South West make up the vast majority of the potential graduate supply to the region. Secondly, although not a key objective for the study, it gives some indications as to the extent South West HEIs are successful in widening participation in higher education by profiling the groups on whom they draw.

We then look at students’ experience of higher education in the South West – particularly on the basis of our leavers survey – and their expectations of the labour market (Chapter 3). The next Chapter (4) examines transitions to the labour market before we turn to the data on graduates’ experiences on entering the labour market and gaining employment (Chapter 5) and onward as they start their careers (Chapter 6). The last chapter looks again at our original typology to sum up the numbers and profile of each of the key groups before discussing some of the policy implications from the study.

## 2. South West Students: What Are They Like?

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In this Chapter we look at the profile of South West students; that is students who either come from the South West or study in the South West.

Analysis of student data enables us to quantify and map the flows of individuals into and out of the South West in order to enter higher education. We will also look at students' attitudes towards, and opinions of, studying in the South West. Together this stage represents the first opportunity for the South West region to retain and attract potentially highly qualified people – an early step in the supply chain of graduate labour.

In terms of our grid we are looking at the first six rows, although at this stage, as we are looking at students while they are still in higher education, we have no knowledge of their eventual labour market destination. Thus we are concentrating on the four groups of students who lived in the South West when they applied to higher education (*ie* potential SW Loyals, Lost SW Graduates and Students and Returners) and also two groups who come from outside the South West: (Incomers and Passers Through). These categories are shaded in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Typology of students' relationship to the South West**

Types of 'student'	Where from?	Where studied?	Where job?
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

Source: IES, 2002

We examine two groups:

- *Applicants* from the South West and those who apply to South West HEIs using data from UCAS
- *Students* in higher education in the South West – using both data from HESA and our own survey of final year students (the leavers survey).

We examine a range of issues including:

- the choices students make when applying for a place at university
- students **from** the South West, and their personal characteristics
- students who chose to study in the South West, their personal characteristics
- why students choose South West HEIs, and
- students' satisfaction with higher education in the South West.

## 2.1 The profile of applicants

In this first section we look at the data on student applications to higher education to see where they apply and why.

### 2.1.1 What influences students' choice?

In 1998/99 (Connor *et al.*, 1999) IES conducted a large scale survey of applicants to universities and colleges. They were asked which factors were important to them when deciding where to apply, using a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). The mean score for each factor was then calculated. Their answers are summarised in Table 2.2, and are presented separately for those who came from the South West and studied in the South West (SW-SW), those who came from outside of the South West and studied in the South West (EW-SW), those from the South West who studied elsewhere (SW-EW), and finally those who came from outside the South West and studied outside the South West (EW-EW).

#### Local students

Local students (SW-SW) are very different from other students, their second most important factor in choosing a university or college, after subject choice which is important for all groups, is distance of institution from home. Seven out of ten SW-SW students prefer an institution close to home, compared to three out of ten students planning to move out of the region (SW-EW). The SW-SW group also place relatively greater importance than other groups on attitudes towards ethnic minorities, disabled

students, and mature students; on childcare facilities; and part-time study options. However, these factors are still towards the lower end of the priority scale, and probably reflect the age and gender profile of the 'local' group. Entry requirements are of less concern to this group than they are to other students. Forty-four per cent of SW-SW students said that they did not mind what the entry requirements were, compared to around one third of other students. SW-SW found high entry requirements and high levels of competition for places less attractive than other groups, although the majority in each group don't mind. From these findings we can surmise that accessibility is important to local students.

### **Mobile students**

Other groups with a connection to the South West could be described as mobile students in that they either come into the region to study, or go out of the South West to study (SW-EW and EW-SW). They are very similar in their priorities and scores, and overall these mobile students are more concerned about the overall image of the university or college. Regionally mobile students could be described as 'footloose and fancy free' when it comes to the location of their university and college of choice – half don't mind whether it is close or far away from home. This suggests that the South West is losing students it could keep if local universities provided the 'right product'.

Looking at the relative importance of factors for the EW-SW group gives us an indication of what attracts people to the South West to study – (after subject and image) it is social life, teaching reputation, and availability of first year accommodation. The type of site was of greater importance to those coming in to study from outside the region (EW-SW) than it was to those already located in the South West. EW-SW students show a much stronger preference for a campus based university.

Conversely, examining the scores for those leaving the region (SW-EW) gives us an indication of what lures people away to study outside of the region – (again after subject and image) it is the availability of accommodation in the first year, social life, and entry requirements. This group were also more strongly attached to the idea of a single site, and a campus higher education experience.

The key messages are that for students from the South West who are planning to study in the region (SW-SW), their choice revolves around 'location, location, location' whereas for the more mobile student a wider range of factors influence their choice but nearness to home is not an issue. Local students are looking for a higher education experience that will fit in with their current lifestyle whereas more mobile students may be looking for a lifestyle which includes image, social life and student community.

**Table 2.2: Mean scores for importance of factors considered in choosing a university/college**

	<b>From SW**, studied SW (SW-SW)</b>	<b>Not from SW, studied SW (EW**-SW)</b>	<b>From SW, studied elsewhere (SW-EW)</b>	<b>Neither from nor studied in SW (EW-EW)</b>
Offered the subjects I wanted*	6.66	6.69	6.66	6.62
Overall image of uni/college*	5.33	5.66	5.57	5.52
Graduate employment prospects*	5.14	5.37	5.35	5.51
Teaching reputation*	5.32	5.48	5.40	5.49
Entry requirements*	5.20	5.41	5.47	5.47
Academic support facilities*	5.17	5.24	5.38	5.37
Uni/college location (town/city)	5.35	5.39	5.32	5.33
Social life at uni/college*	4.64	5.53	5.51	5.29
Social life nearby*	4.51	5.41	5.33	5.13
Accommodation for 1st year*	4.02	5.47	5.55	4.76
Distance from home*	5.36	4.20	4.27	4.81
Research reputation*	4.23	4.40	4.50	4.60
Competition for place*	4.25	4.42	4.33	4.45
Safety and security*	4.19	4.21	4.27	4.41
Type of site*	4.13	4.68	4.60	4.30
Cost of living*	3.94	4.52	4.64	4.30
Sports facilities*	3.70	4.36	4.37	4.23
Size (no of students)	3.93	3.96	4.02	3.99
Work placement option*	3.87	3.92	3.67	3.99
Number of sites*	3.34	3.57	3.80	3.63
Term time job opportunity*	3.53	3.38	3.47	3.61
Offers combined or joint courses	3.65	3.50	3.36	3.49
Ethnic minority, attitudes towards*	2.98	2.59	2.64	2.91
Study abroad option*	2.48	3.08	2.91	2.85
Disabled students, attitudes towards*	2.91	2.48	2.60	2.75
Mature students, attitudes towards*	2.92	1.99	2.07	2.37
Part-time study option*	1.58	1.39	1.42	1.54
Childcare facilities*	1.37	1.16	1.19	1.30
<i>Minimum N</i>	<i>572</i>	<i>748</i>	<i>1,138</i>	<i>14,171</i>

\* Statistically significant difference

\*\* EW = elsewhere (*i.e.* other than the South West; SW = South West)

Source: IES/Making the Right Choice, 2002

### 2.1.2 Where do applicants apply?

Having established that the location of a university and its distance from home are both factors which are of importance in decisions about where to apply, we can access the data from UCAS to look at where students from each region apply.

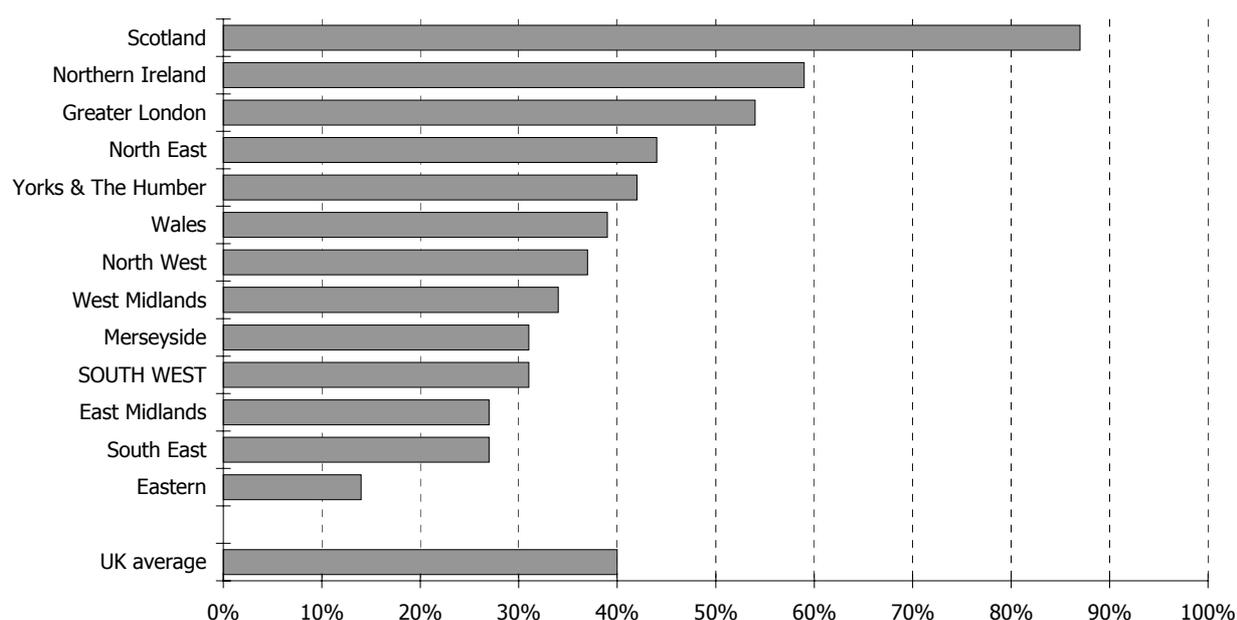
UCAS processed 1,742,000 applications for full-time degree and HND places in 2001. Of these, 148,000 applications were made to institutions in the South West, and 142,000 applications came from people living in the South West. Each applicant can make up to six applications, hence the number of applicants is usually lower than the number of applications.

UCAS provided more detailed information on applicants from the South West and those from outside the region making applications through UCAS' main scheme in South West HEIs.

Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 shows the number of applications made by people from each region, by region of institutions. The Table shows that 31 per cent of applications made by people from the South West are to their home region. The proportion in other regions varies widely from 14 per cent of Eastern region applications, to 87 per cent of Scottish applications – see Figure 2.1. Courses in the South West appear to be less attractive to people from the South West than do 'home' courses to people from many other regions. However there are a variety of factors at work here, some of which pull in opposite directions. For example:

- the range and availability of institutions within home region and ease of access to institutions within neighbouring regions
- the financial implications of study and its interaction with socio-economic profile of the local population (*ie* those from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to consider studying outside of their home region, Connor *et al.*, 2001b)
- and effect of ethnicity (*ie* overall individuals from black and

**Figure 2.1: Percentage of applications made to home region, by region of domicile**



Source: IES/UCAS 2002

minority ethnic groups are more likely to study in their home region (Connor and Tackey, 2002), probably in regions that are more ethnically diverse).

### **2.1.3 Where do South West applicants apply?**

It is possible to narrow down and look at the application and acceptance patterns of people from the South West. As Table A3.3 in Appendix 3 shows, the largest proportion of applications made by university aspirants from the South West are to South West institutions. Neighbouring regions, *ie* the South East, Wales and the West Midlands attract large numbers of applications, as does London. In general, the further away from the South West a region is, the fewer applications its universities and colleges attract from the South West. This is not necessarily a South West regional phenomenon.

While the profile of applicants differs little by gender and ethnicity, the data indicate that younger applicants are more likely to make applications outside of the South West than are those in older groups. One in four applications from the 20 and under group are for places in South West institutions, compared with one in three applications from 21-24 year olds, one in two applications from 25-39 year olds, and two in three applications from the 40+ group.

Applicants from professional backgrounds tend to be younger and to roam more widely in their choice of institution/region than do those from manual backgrounds. Only 22 per cent of applications from the professional group are for South West institutions, compared to over 30 per cent for the manual groups. Applicants from professional backgrounds are also less likely to accept an offer of a place in the South West than other applicants.

Choice of institution and region at application stage may reflect a number of factors, not least the range and availability of institutions in the home region (see above). For example, an institution may be chosen as a safety net, because it offers a particular subject, rather than because it is where the student wishes to live and study. Alternatively, an institution/region may be chosen in the spirit of adventure. Therefore, it is interesting to see that over half of acceptances by people from the South West are for institutions within their home region, suggesting that during final decision making they tend to be more cautious.

#### **... and how successful are they?**

Overall, 23 per cent of applications to South West institutions become acceptances. Although South West domiciled applicants make applications to institutions outside of the region, they are more successful at gaining places in South West HEIs than they are at gaining places outside of the region. Raw data cannot tell us

whether this is because their preference is to stay close to home, or because local institutions prioritise local students. Neither can we comment upon whether the South West is unique in this respect or whether it shares this pattern with other regions, due to UCAS data constraints.

Looking at the personal profiles of people from the region accepting places in South West HEIs, further analysis shows that female and white applicants are slightly more likely to accept places in local universities and colleges than male or black and minority ethnic applicants.

A much higher proportion of local mature applicants accept places in South West institutions when compared to younger applicants, and this difference widens for each successive age group. However, around 23 per cent of applications by local black and minority ethnic individuals in the 25 years and over age group accept a place in a South West institution, compared to 39 per cent of white people in the same age group.

#### **2.1.4 From where else do South West HEIs draw students?**

As each person (applicant) can apply to a number of courses through UCAS, the number of applications exceeds the number of applicants. Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 sets out the number of applications and applicants to South West HEIs.

South West institutions draw 29 per cent of their *applications* for places from students already living in the South West. The next largest group of applications come from the South East, followed by Wales, West Midlands and London.

However, when the region of origin of *applicants* is considered, the picture alters. Twenty three per cent of applicants to South West HEIs come from the South West. Applicants to South West HEIs are as likely to come from the South East as they are the South West. Londoners are the next largest group of applicants followed by people from the Eastern region and the West Midlands. In part this pattern among applicants is a reflection of the relative population sizes of each region and the relative higher education provision. However, the application behaviour of applicants in each region is also a factor. The final column in Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 gives the ratio of applications to applicants, *ie* the average number of applications made per person. By this measure, people from the South West appear more determined to find a place in the South West than are applicants from outside applying to the region. Applicants from neighbouring regions, from the South East and Wales, also make a relatively high proportion of applications to the South West – 1.5 applications per person.

Looking at data for applications and acceptances we can calculate conversion rates *ie* the ratio of **acceptances** to applications. The conversion rates for South West institutions are much higher for local students than for those from outside of the region. From every four local applications, the region achieves one student; whereas to gain one student from outside of the region a total of eight applications will need to be generated. The conversion rate of South West HEIs for those from the neighbouring regions of South East, Wales and West Midlands, are better than those from further afield.

Among the South West institutions, the conversion rate varies greatly, though whether this is due to the relative popularity of each institution, or the flexibility of its entry criteria is difficult to say. At one end of the spectrum, nine per cent of applications to the University of Bristol became an acceptance. Other 'national' facing institutions have similar patterns, *eg* Bath and Exeter (14 per cent in both cases). Applications to smaller, specialist institutions such as the Royal Agricultural College and Dartington and Falmouth Colleges of Arts, and to some extent, the College of St Mark and St John, are much more likely to be accepted though this is not the case for the Arts Institute at Bournemouth. These patterns tend to hold across different subject groups. The other South West institutions sit close to the national average for applications to acceptances, at 19 per cent.

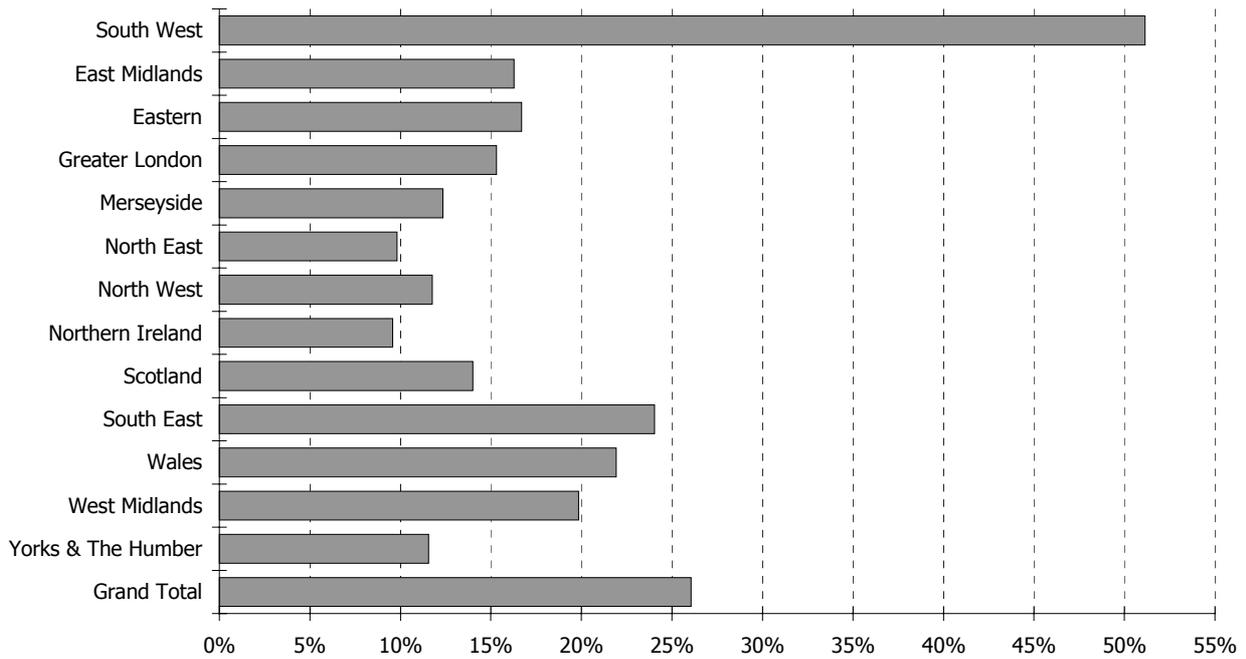
Fifty-one per cent of applicants to South West HEIs are female, the proportion is higher (54 per cent) among applicants from the South West. Local applicants to South West institutions are older than those applying from outside of the region – 23 per cent are over the age of 21 at application, compared to five to 11 per cent from other regions. However, when age and sex are viewed together, we see that the proportion of females among South West applicants increases among older applicants, from 52 per cent of the under 21s, to 49 per cent of 21-24 year olds, to 61 per cent of 25-39 year olds and 72 per cent of the 40+ group.

Half of all acceptances for places in South West HEIs administered by the UCAS scheme, come from South West people. The proportion of applicants from other regions taking places in the South West is much lower – see Figure 2.2.

Women are no more likely to accept a place than men. However, applicants from the South West in the older age groups have a greater tendency to accept places in the region – see Figure 2.3.

We can therefore conclude that local and more mature applicants have a high propensity to both apply and accept places in South West HEIs. This has a policy implication for regional HEIs, in that if they want to increase numbers of students, they must continue to target these individuals and ensure courses are attractive to

**Figure 2.2: Proportion of applicants accepting places in the South West, by region of domicile**

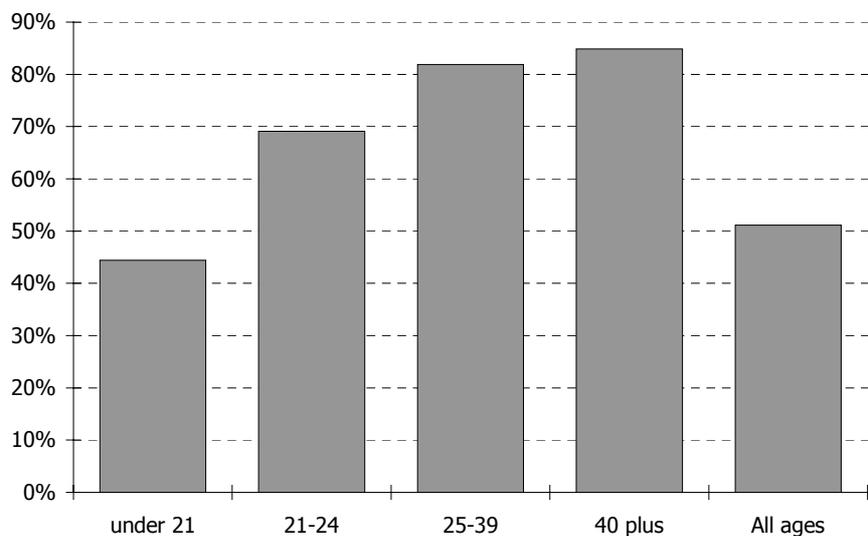


Source: IES/UCAS 2002

them perhaps in terms of ease of access and flexibility of provision.

Nine out of ten applications to South West institutions from the South West are from people who list their ethnicity as white, and four per cent are from the black and minority ethnic community. The remaining six per cent of applications do not list ethnicity and in future discussions of applications/applicants and students, the percentages in different ethnic groups have been calculated from a base which includes these unknowns. The ethnic balance in

**Figure 2.3: Proportion of South West applicants accepting places in South West HEIs by age group**



Source: IES/UCAS 2002

applications from South West people is mirrored in acceptances, and is close from every other region of domicile except Greater London, the North East and Scotland. The number of applications from black and minority ethnic individuals living in the North East and Scotland are relatively small, and will therefore be subject to greater statistical variation. However, of the 16,300 applications from residents of Greater London, 28 per cent came from black and minority ethnic people, though only 18 per cent of acceptances did so. The secondary sources give no clue as to what may dissuade black and minority ethnic students from studying in the South West, though the data suggest a large proportion change their mind between the application and acceptance stages of the process. Further research is needed to investigate what factors are at work here. Is it that South West HEIs do not in reality offer the experience that individuals from diverse cultures seek? Is it that applications to South West HEIs are not amongst the top choices of black and minority ethnic individuals (perhaps just filling space on the application form), or that admissions processes in the region operate against these groups?

South West institutions receive around 12 per cent of their applications from South West domiciled people from professional, and 39 per cent from intermediate/'white collar' families. This is a relatively low proportion. Overall, 16 per cent of non-South West domiciled applications to these universities and colleges are from professional and 43 per cent from white-collar backgrounds. However, South West institutions do attract a higher than average proportion of applications from the skilled manual and non-manual communities in the region. This pattern may reflect the relative lack of mobility of those from less affluent family backgrounds, and as such may not be a phenomena experienced solely by the South West region.

### **2.1.5 In which subjects are South West applicants interested?**

Staying with the UCAS data on applicants to full-time courses, it appears that applicants from the South West are interested in the full range of courses on offer in UK HEIs. The most popular choices are the creative arts (14 per cent of applicants), social studies (11 per cent) and business and administrative studies (ten per cent) (see Table A3.2 in Appendix 3). Subject choices are very gendered, with women dominating the biological sciences, education, creative arts, social studies and subjects allied to medicine, whereas men form the majority in engineering and technology, mathematics and informatics (including computing), and the physical sciences. In general, older people have a greater interest in studying subjects allied to medicine and the creative arts, and younger people are more interested in business and administrative studies and engineering and technology.

Looking at the applications made by potential students from the South West to full-time courses, in comparison with the subjects available in South Western HEIs (using the subject profile of full-time existing students as a proxy for the number of places), reveals some disparities between 'wants' and 'offers'.

It appears that full-time places in the subjects allied to medicine, the creative arts and combined courses are under supplied, whereas places for biological sciences, physical sciences, mathematics/computing, engineering and technology, social studies (including Law) and business and administrative studies are over supplied.

### 2.1.6 Which regions rival the South West?

In the UCAS data it is possible to identify which other regions received applications at the same time as people applied to the South West. The most popular choices, after the South West and home regions, are listed in Table 2.3, which reveals that neighbouring regions are generally favoured by applicants.

The ratio of acceptances to applications is generally higher for applications to home regions, typically 20 to 25 per cent (one in four or five). Around 15 per cent of applicants from neighbouring regions accept a place in the South West. However, the ratio for applicants to the South West from other more distant regions is around ten per cent. On this evidence, students appear to be reluctant to travel too far from home.

**Table 2.3: Most popular regions of institutions by applicants to the South West (excluding home regions)**

<b>Home Region</b>	<b>Favoured regions</b>
East Midlands	North West, West Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside
Eastern	South East, East Midlands, London/Yorkshire & Humberside
London	South East, West Midlands/Yorkshire and Humberside/East Midlands
North East	Yorkshire and Humberside, North West, East Midlands
North West	Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands
Northern Ireland	Scotland, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside
Scotland	North East, Greater London, Yorkshire and Humberside
South East	London, East Midlands, West Midlands/Yorkshire and Humberside
Wales	South East, West Midlands, East Midlands
West Midlands	Yorkshire and Humberside/East Midlands, South East
Yorkshire and Humberside	East Midlands, North West, West Midlands/North East

*Source: IES/UCAS 2002*

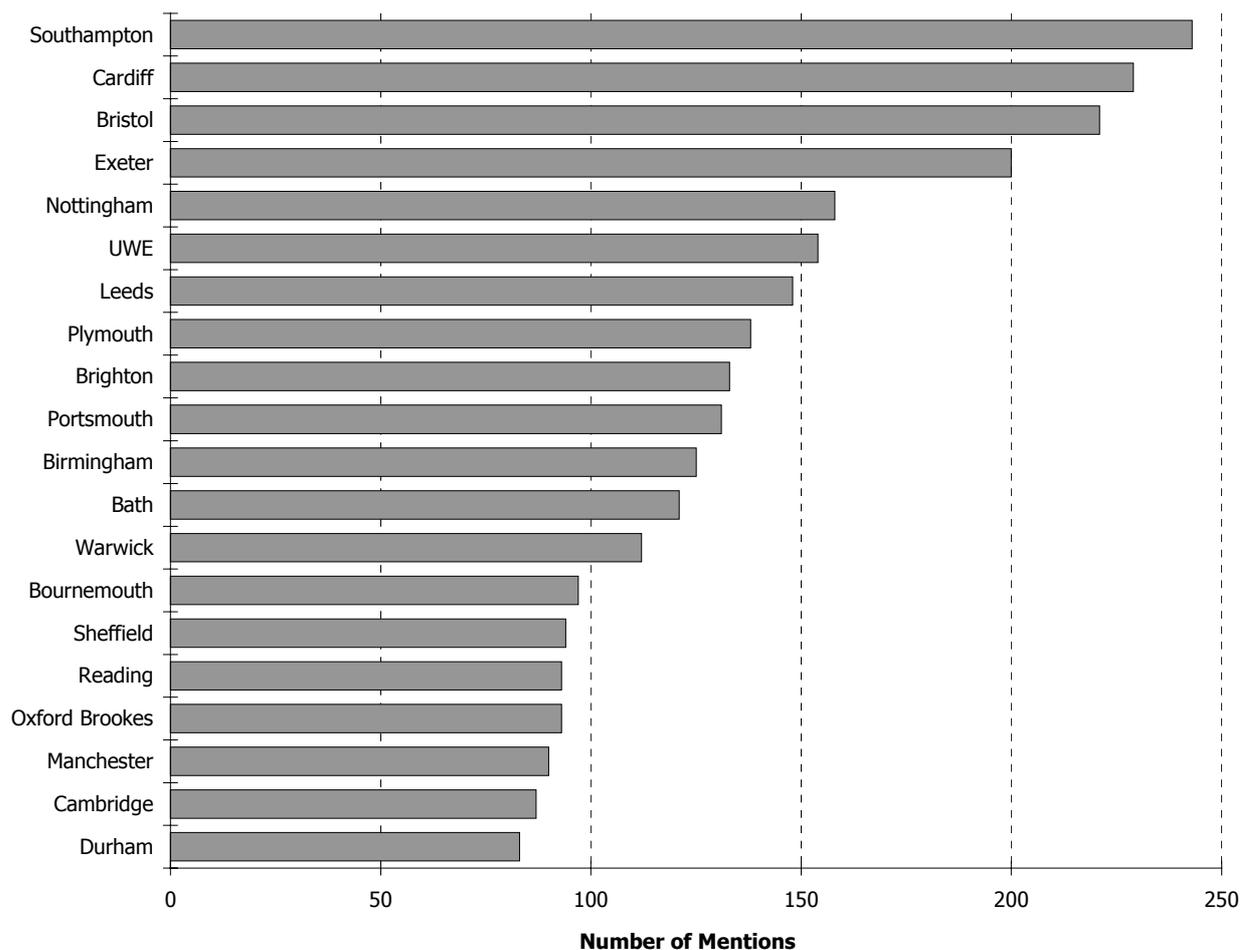
### 2.1.7 Other HEIs considered by South West students

In our leavers survey of final year students in South West HEIs, respondents were asked to note any other universities or colleges to which they had seriously considered applying to (in addition to the institution that they actually attended). Leavers could record up to two other institutions. A multi-response analysis indicated that the most commonly considered institutions amongst full-time leavers were:

- the University of Southampton,
- the University of Wales (Cardiff),
- the University of Bristol, and
- the University of Exeter.

All were mentioned by at least 200 full-time leavers (see Figure 2.4). Other popular competitor institutions to South West institutions were the universities of: Nottingham, Leeds, Brighton,

**Figure 2.4: Serious alternative universities and colleges, as mentioned by students\* who actually attended a SW institution**



\* full-time leavers only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

**Table 2.4: Most commonly mentioned universities and colleges considered by actual university attended\*#**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Most popular alternatives</b>
Arts Institute	Brighton
Bath	Bristol, Warwick, Cardiff
Bath Spa	UWE, Brighton, Cardiff
Bournemouth	Southampton, Brighton, Portsmouth
Bristol	Nottingham, Cambridge, Leeds
Exeter	Bristol, Southampton, Warwick
Falmouth	Plymouth, Cardiff, Brighton
Gloucestershire	UWE, Cardiff, Bournemouth
Plymouth	Exeter, Southampton, UWE, Portsmouth
Royal Agricultural	Reading
St Mark and St John	Plymouth, Exeter
UWE	Cardiff, Oxford Brookes, Plymouth

\* full-time leavers only, figures for Dartington not reported due to the very small numbers involved  
# focusing on top 20 universities/colleges only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

Birmingham, and Warwick (all mentioned by over 100 full-time leavers).

Few part-time and OU respondents volunteered alternative institutions, but for the small number that did the most commonly mentioned were: Exeter, Southampton, Bristol, UWE and Plymouth (part-time); and Plymouth, UWE, Bristol and Exeter (OU).

Southampton, Bristol, Wales, Nottingham and Portsmouth were particularly common amongst those who studied science subjects; whilst Wales, Exeter, Bristol, Leeds and UWE were the most popular alternatives for those who had followed arts courses. Further analysis indicated particular 'competitor' institutions for individual South West universities and colleges (see Table 2.4), and for particular types of courses (see Table 2.5).

Analysis also indicates that South West institutions were much more popular (likely to be mentioned) by those who lived in the region prior to their higher education studies than those who came from other areas of the UK.

### **2.1.8 Which subjects draw applications to the South West?**

Turning back to the UCAS data, the subject breakdown of applications to the South West is very similar to that seen among all applications, with the exception that 12 per cent of the South

West's applications are for places on creative arts courses, compared to nine per cent from the UK as a whole. In addition to the creative arts, the most popular courses are those in social studies (13 per cent of applications) and business and administrative studies (12 per cent).

### 2.1.9 Where do applicants who reject the South West go?

We can identify where students who apply to a South West HEI but go elsewhere end up by looking at the region of acceptance among those who made at least one application to a South West HEI. Among those not receiving or accepting an offer of a place in the South West (and we do not know which reason for not choosing the South West is the driver of this decision), the most common region of choice was the South East, followed by Greater London (Table 2.6).

### 2.1.10 How many South West applicants chose South West HEIs?

We move now to another of our major data sets. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collates information about students registered at universities and colleges in the UK. The data, covering students in 166 HEIs in the academic year ending 31 July 2001, shows that around 37 per cent of full-time students from the South West choose to study in their home region. That is

**Table 2.5: Most commonly mentioned universities and colleges considered by subject studied\*#**

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Most popular alternatives</b>
Medicine	Birmingham, Cambridge, Nottingham
Health	Southampton, UWE, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff
Biological/physical sciences	Southampton, Bristol, Cardiff, Nottingham
Agriculture/veterinary sciences	Reading
Math/stats/IT	Southampton, Portsmouth, Exeter, Oxford Brookes
Engineering/technology	Southampton, Bristol, Bath, Nottingham
Social studies	Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter, Cambridge, Nottingham
Business/admin studies	Cardiff, Bournemouth, Plymouth, UWE
Humanities	Exeter, Bristol, Cardiff
Languages	Bristol, Exeter, Durham
Creative arts/media	Brighton, Cardiff, Bournemouth
Education	Exeter, UWE, Cardiff, Bath

\* full-time leavers only

# focusing on top 20 universities/colleges only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

**Table 2.6: Region of acceptance among applicants to South West HEIs choosing another region**

	<b>Per cent</b>
East Midlands	11
Eastern	7
Greater London	12
Merseyside	2
North East	5
North West	6
Northern Ireland	0
Scotland	3
South East	22
Wales	11
West Midlands	10
Yorks & Humberside	11

*Source: IES/UCAS 2002*

23,460 from a total of 63,530 students from the South West. Most regions (see Figure 2.5) retain a higher percentage of their students, most notably Scotland which, in addition to its size has a different system of university education. Other regions retain a smaller proportion, for example, Eastern region, though there are relatively few institutions in that region.

In terms of the regions chosen by students from the South West, the South East, and Wales are the most popular. Table A3.3 in Appendix 3 indicates that as an institution's region gets further away, fewer South West students take places there. The exception is London, but the capital includes a number of specialist institutions which may partly explain its appeal.

Table A3.10 in Appendix 3 shows the most popular HEIs among full-time students from the South West. Beyond the South West, popular choices include a number of institutions just outside of the region's borders, for example, Cardiff, Southampton, Birmingham and Oxford. These students appear unwilling to roam very far, which suggests that in future, students like them may be relatively easy to persuade to stay within the region.

There are, however, differences between the 'migration patterns' of students from the different sub-regions (see Table A3.12 Appendix 3). These differences largely support the idea that students prefer institutions close to home, when provision is available. In summary:

- students from Cornwall and Devon have very similar destinations, and are most likely to choose institutions in the

South West. A high proportion of the West of England's students also stay within the region

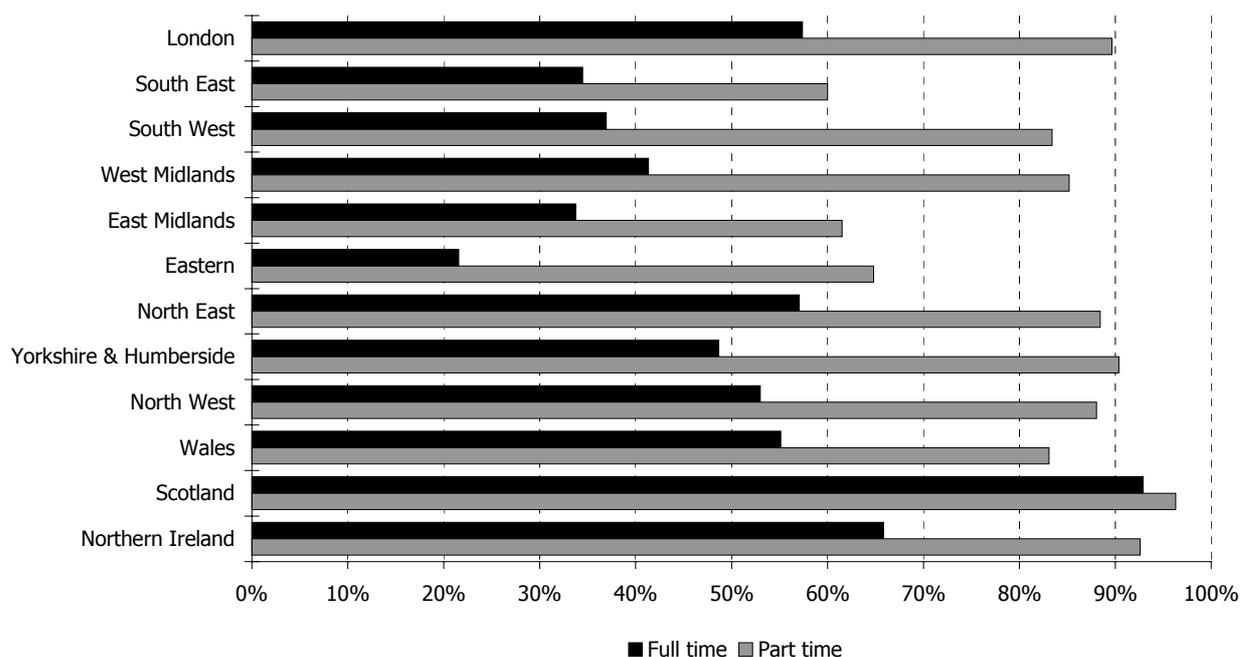
- one in four students from Dorset and Wiltshire cross the border to the South East, and are the least likely to stay in the South West. This is likely to be a result of the relatively low provision in these sub-regions and ease of access to institutions across the border
- one in eight students from Dorset choose institutions in London, but only one in fifteen go to Welsh HEIs
- ten per cent of students from Gloucestershire show a preference for institutions in the neighbouring region of the West Midlands.

As Figure 2.5 shows, part-time students are much more likely to study in their home region than are full-time students. Over 80 per cent of part-time students from the South West choose to study in their home region, on a par with the majority of regions in the UK.

Students leaving the South West to study part time, most commonly take courses in neighbouring South East region (Table A3.11, Appendix 3). Table A3.10 in Appendix 3 also lists the most popular HEIs among part-time students in the South West. Part-time students are much more concentrated than full-time students and half attend the University of Plymouth. The University of the West of England, Bristol is also a large part-time HE provider.

As with full-timers, part-time students from the seven sub-regions make different choices about region of institution. Nine out of ten

**Figure 2.5: Percentage of students from each region choosing to study in their home region**



Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

students from Devon, Cornwall and Somerset choose institutions in the South West, compared to seven out of ten of those from Dorset and Gloucestershire. Only 54 per cent of part-time students from Wiltshire study in their home region, and for these students and those from Dorset, the South East is a popular choice.

## **2.2 The profile of students in the South West**

The South West provides around 63,530 full-time, first degree students to HEIs across the UK, but only educates 60,780 students in its own universities and colleges (HESA Student Record, 2001). As such, the South West is a net exporter of students.

### **2.2.1 Where do students in the South West come from?**

Of the 60,780 full-time students in South West HEIs, 39 per cent (23,460) are from the South West. One in four students in South West HEIs come to the region from the South East, and smaller proportions originate from London, the West Midlands and Eastern region (Table A3.14, Appendix 3). The most distant regions contribute the fewest numbers of students to South West HEIs. Part-time courses in South West HEIs are largely filled by local students, with one in twenty students coming in from the South East, but very few from further afield. There are nearly 7,000 part-time students in South West HEIs.

### **2.2.2 From where does each South West HEI draw its constituencies?**

We have established that at the regional level, over one-third of South West students have chosen to study in their home region. However, the regional emphasis masks a great deal of variation among the eleven South West institutions included in the HESA student data. Unfortunately, a HESA student data return for 2001 was not required from the Royal Agricultural College, the Arts Institute at Bournemouth or the Open University, and these institutions are therefore not included in the following analyses of the HESA data. Table A3.5 in Appendix 3 shows the regional origins of full-time students in South West institutions, and is summarised in Table 2.7.

Certain institutions can be described as local recruiters, for example Bath Spa or the College of St Mark and St John. Others have a more national intake, for example Bristol, Bath or Exeter. Although the post-92 universities were built on a tradition of addressing regional skills and training needs, the difference between the local and national recruiters in the South West is not a straightforward post-92/old university split. Bournemouth, a 'new' university, is also a national recruiter.

**Table 2.7: From where do South West institutions draw their constituencies? – Full-time students**

	<b>SW %</b>	<b>Elsewhere %</b>	<b>Unknown %</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
Bath Spa University College	62	37	1	2,270
The University of Bath	21	77	2	5,110
Bournemouth University	33	66	2	6,460
The University of Bristol	16	83	1	8,700
Dartington College of Arts	41	57	1	360
The University of Exeter	31	68	1	6,420
Falmouth College of Arts	46	50	5	1,140
University of Gloucestershire	45	53	2	5,050
The University of Plymouth	55	43	1	10,180
College of St Mark and St John	72	25	3	1,980
University of the West of England, Bristol	42	56	2	13,120

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

Each institution's catchment area becomes even more apparent when the domiciles of students are examined in further detail (Table A3.5, Appendix 3). With few exceptions (*eg* the region's 'traditional' universities and Bournemouth University), around one in four of each institution's intake come from the immediate vicinity, for example, 26 per cent of the University of Plymouth's students are from Devon. The College of St Mark and St John take an even larger proportion of their students from the local area. However, only 17 per cent of Bournemouth's students come from Dorset, only four per cent of Bath's are from West of England, and only nine per cent of Exeter's originate in Devon.

Among the more national recruiters, the South East supplies a high proportion of graduates. Indeed, Bath, Bristol and Bournemouth take more students from the South East than they do the South West. Exeter, located in the South West peninsular, takes as many students from the South East as it does the South West, and more Londoners than South Westerners.

Table 2.8 shows the proportion of part-time students in South West institutions who are drawn from the region. Most institutions who recruit locally to full-time courses, have a high proportion of South West part-time students, and vice versa. However, although an institution may recruit a large number of South West students to full-time courses, that does necessarily preclude them from being a national recruiter to their part-time courses, for example, Dartington College of Arts and the University of Gloucestershire. Exeter on the other hand, recruits a relatively high proportion of its part-time students from the South West. The table also reveals that, with the exception of the

**Table 2.8: From where do South West institutions draw their constituencies? – Part-time students**

	<b>SW %</b>	<b>Elsewhere %</b>	<b>Unknown %</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
Bath Spa University College	91	9	0	~
The University of Bath	57	43	0	~
Bournemouth University	77	20	3	870
The University of Bristol	50	48	2	~
Dartington College of Arts	50	50	0	~
The University of Exeter	89	11	0	~
Falmouth College of Arts	95	2	4	~
University of Gloucestershire	64	33	3	610
The University of Plymouth	93	7	1	3,910
College of St Mark and St John	97	3	0	~
University of the West of England, Bristol	84	14	1	1,370

~ less than 100

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

University of Plymouth, institutions recruiting from the South West generally have very small numbers of part-time students.

As with full-time students, we have explored which sub-regions institutions' body of students are drawn from (Table A3.6, Appendix 3). The numbers involved are often small, though they show that by and large, institutions take a large proportion of their part-time students from their own, or neighbouring sub-regions.

The Open University in the South West lists students by their study centre and its local catchment area. Around 11 per cent are studying in/from the Cheltenham and Gloucester area, 19 per cent are allied to the Swindon/Chippenham/Bath centres, 17 per cent to Bristol, 14 per cent to Weston/Taunton/Yeovil and 38 per cent to Exeter, Barnstaple, Torquay, Plymouth, St Austell and Redruth.

### **2.2.3 What do students in the South West look like?**

The HESA data show that nine out of ten of those studying in the South West study on a full-time basis. Some regions, such as Northern Ireland have a lower proportion (85 per cent) studying full-time, however neighbouring regions are very similar to the South West and the UK as a whole.

Full-time students in the South West are fairly typical of those in the UK as a whole, and exhibit only minor differences in age group, gender and subject choice. For example, a slightly lower

proportion of students in the South West are female than in the UK as a whole, though accounting for 52 per cent of the South West's student population, women still form the majority. The proportion of full-time students in the South West choosing degrees in the subjects allied to medicine is a little lower than that in the UK as a whole, though this is compensated for with a higher proportion of physical science students. The majority of students studying in the South West are white – 89 per cent, compared to 81 per cent in the UK as a whole. The ethnic balance of students studying in the region (where known) is, however, a much closer match to the profile of the local population, and of the local graduate population.

For full-time courses, broadly speaking, national recruiters attract a higher proportion of male students than most other institutions in the South West, and they also have a younger student profile (see Table A3.7 in Appendix 3). This is as would be expected given that younger and male students tend to be the most mobile.

Part-time students in the South West are predominantly female and tend to be more mature than full-time students, as would be expected. A high proportion study subjects allied to medicine, mainly nursing courses at Bournemouth and UWE, but especially Plymouth. Other popular subjects include law and business administration. No other region has such a high proportion of its part-time students in this subject group.

Four South West institutions account for 60 per cent of part-time students in the South West. In those institutions, around one in ten are studying on a part-time basis, with the exception of the University of Plymouth, where the size of the Institute for Health Studies increases the proportion to 28 per cent. On the whole, local recruiters tend to have more part-time students who are 30 years or older. The gender profile of each institution is swayed, amongst other things, by the subjects offered on a part-time basis. For example, at Bournemouth and Plymouth, subjects allied to medicine attract a large number of female students, whereas the University of the West of England's architecture courses appeals to male students.

Table A3.7 and Table A3.8 in Appendix 3 summarise the characteristics of the full and part-time student population of each South West institution, from the HESA data.

The Open University has over 12,500 students in the South West, the majority of whom are studying to first degree level. Like other part-time students, the majority are female, but at 57 per cent of the total, women do not dominate to quite the same extent. The Open University students' age profile is slightly older than that of other South West part-time students. Just over three-quarters (78 per cent) of South West Open University students are over the age

of 30. Around two per cent of Open University students describe themselves as of Black or minority ethnic origin.

Although Open University courses are modular and therefore do not always sit neatly within subject categories, the degree disciplines of Open University students can be estimated from the faculty to which they are allocated. The Arts faculty is the most populous in the South West, and covers 19 per cent of students. The Technology faculty has 17 per cent, Social Science 16 per cent as does Maths/Computing. Fourteen per cent of Open University students in the South West are within the Science faculty. Additionally, the Open University has around 670 students in its Business School, many of whom are taking Business Studies first degrees.

#### **2.2.4 What else have we found out about students in the South West?**

Our leavers survey of students in their final year at South West institutions gives us further detail of the profile of students studying in the South West.

##### **Full-time South West leavers**

The gender make up of our leavers sample broadly reflects the profile from the HESA data (above) as would be expected through the data weighting process (see Appendix 4). Thus there are more women than men coming to the end of their full-time first degree course (53 per cent and 48 per cent respectively, see Table 2.9). The vast majority (83 per cent) of full-time leavers are of traditional higher education age, in that they were under 21 years old when they started their courses. A further seven per cent were aged between 21 and 24 on entry, three per cent were aged between 25 and 29, and seven per cent were at least 30 years old when they commenced their studies. Also the vast majority (95 per cent) of leavers classify themselves as white, and only five per cent would consider themselves as belonging to a black and minority ethnic group or would describe themselves as having a mixed racial background. This corresponds to national data (when adjusted to remove the proportion who do not list their ethnicity, which for the leavers survey was negligible).

Almost four in five (78 per cent) leavers who studied full-time came from families with experience of higher education, in that either their parent(s), sibling(s) or a member of their wider family had attended a university or college of higher education. Women were more likely to have had familial experience of higher education, as few (20 per cent) were the first member of their family to go to university or college.

Leavers were asked to report their main activity when applying for a place at a South West higher education institution, and this

**Table 2.9: Personal characteristics of final year students in South West HEIs**

		<b>Full-time respondents (%)</b>	<b>Part-time respondents (%)</b>	<b>OU respondents (%)</b>
Gender				
	Male	48	29	43
	Female	53	71	58
Age				
	20 or under	83	11	2
	21 to 24	7	6	8
	25 to 29	3	14	15
	30 or over	7	69	76
	<i>Mean age at entry (yrs)</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>37</i>
Ethnicity				
	White	95	94	99
	Black and minority ethnic	2	4	1
	Mixed race/other	3	2	<1
Familial experience of HE				
	No	22	32	26
	Yes	78	68	74
Status prior to studies				
	State school	25	2	<1
	Independent school	16	2	0
	Sixth Form college	24	3	<1
	FE college	17	8	0
	Job	15	78	69
	Looking after home/family/retired/ill health	1	4	27
	Time out/unemployed	2	2	2

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

gives us an indication of their route into higher education. The majority (65 per cent) of leavers, due to their age profile, came to university or college from school or sixth form college. A further 17 per cent came via further education college and 15 per cent had been in employment prior to their studies (see Table 2.9). Very few reported that they had either been taking time out, looking after a home or family, been in retirement, or looking for work.

Approximately two in five (44 per cent) leavers who had studied full-time had lived in the South West prior to taking up their place in a South West university or college. This is only slightly higher than the proportion seen in the HESA data (39 per cent),

**Table 2.10: Geographical origin of final year students in South West HEIs**

	Type of respondent		
	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	OU (%)
Region of origin prior to studies			
Cornwall	3	7	7
Devon	14	32	24
Dorset	9	23	7
Gloucestershire	4	13	10
Somerset	2	5	5
West of England	10	5	18
Wiltshire	3	4	9
South West	44	88	80
Elsewhere	56	12	20

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

suggesting those with stronger links to the South West were marginally more likely to participate in the survey for some reason. Indeed a quarter of all full-time leavers came from either Devon or the West of England (see Table 2.10). Those originating from the South West were more likely to be female, white, and older than those coming to study in the South West from outside of the region. They were also relatively more likely to have taken a place at the College of St Mark and St John, Bath Spa University College, the Arts Institute in Bournemouth, and the University of Plymouth (which follows the HESA regional findings see Table 3.7, Appendix 3). This indicates that perhaps these institutions serve a relatively more local market.

Looking at the study patterns of leavers, the most popular courses in South West institutions were in the areas of: biological and physical sciences (which includes psychology), social studies (which includes law), business and administrative studies (which includes leisure and tourism) and creative arts and media (see Table 2.11). As noted above, subject of study is heavily influenced by gender, and full-time female leavers were more likely to have studied subjects allied to health and medicine, education, and languages. Male leavers were relatively more likely to have followed courses in engineering and technology, maths, statistics and IT, and to a certain extent, biological and physical sciences. Age also influences subject choice, and medicine, languages, business and administrative studies, and biological and physical sciences were relatively more popular amongst younger leavers. Older leavers, on the other hand, were more likely to have studied subjects allied to health (eg Nursing), humanities, creative arts and media, and education. Indeed the greatest average entry age was found amongst those studying subjects allied to health (24 years

**Table 2.11: Subjects studied by final year students in South West HEIs**

Subject area	Type of respondent		
	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	OU (%)
Medicine	1	1	0
Health	3	49	6
Biological/physical sciences	18	1	18
Agricultural/veterinary sciences	3	1	0
Maths/stats/IT	7	6	11
Engineering/technology	7	3	11
Social studies	14	7	23
Business/admin studies	13	14	0
Humanities	4	5	28
Languages	7	1	2
Creative arts/media	12	12	1
Education	6	0	1
Other	4	1	1

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

old). Interestingly, subjects allied to health, and maths, statistics and IT were relatively more popular amongst those originally from the South West; and medicine and languages were more popular amongst those who came to region to study from outside.

Interviews with a subset of leavers indicated that subject of study was chosen for a variety of reasons including: interest and enjoyment, to follow on from previous studies, because the individual was good at the subject in school or college, or to keep their options open. Many indicated the importance of improving their employability in their decision, noting that they had chosen their subject or type of degree course to improve their career prospects and, for some, to help them stand out. Combined with the data in Table 2.2 from the Right Choice survey, this suggests that employability is a key concern for students choosing both course and institution. On subject choice, they said:

*'I chose English because I've always been undecided about career paths. I wanted to leave open a range of different careers.'* (Female, Passer Through, English)

*'The course sounded interesting but it appealed mostly because of its status as a double degree and because of the university. I felt it would improve my employability prospects to do a degree that entailed a high level of difficulty.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Medicinal Biochemistry)

*'I was good at it and thought it would help me get a good job. I considered doing business studies but I thought that there are too many people doing business studies. I wanted to do something that not many other people do. I felt that having an unusual qualification might be advantageous, more prestigious.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Applied Statistics)

*'I could have done a science based degree, this would have been the safe option but I would have always wondered whether I could have succeeded in Theatre. I would have regretted not doing the subject that I feel passionate about. I know that my future employment prospects may be better served by a more conventional degree but my course is unusual enough for me to stand out from the crowd.'* (Female, Passer Through, Theatre Studies)

*'I chose Aerospace Engineering because I knew I was virtually guaranteed a good job at the end of it, also because I am female I knew that I would easily get on the course ... there is a severe lack of women in the engineering industry and they want to attract more women.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, Aerospace Engineering)

Almost half (48 per cent) of full-time leavers reported having an element of work experience built-in to their courses, and for many this was compulsory. Work experience was particularly common in education, health, business and administrative studies, languages, biological and physical science, and maths, statistics and IT courses.

Interviews with leavers indicated that those who had had a placement or work experience element to their course had greatly enjoyed and appreciated these, especially those who had been able to spend some time working or studying abroad.

Institutions with the largest proportions of full-time leavers were the universities of Plymouth, Bristol, West of England (UWE) and Exeter (Table 2.12). As noted above, the institutions appear to have particular profiles, which largely reflect their course offerings (see Table 2.13) but also reflect their ability to attract students from outside of their immediate vicinity. Thus the Arts Institute, Bath Spa University College, Falmouth College of Arts, Gloucestershire University and the College of St Mark and St John were relatively more popular amongst female full-time leavers, and older full-time leavers. These institutions were largely local recruiters (*ie* taking a greater proportion of students from the South West than from outside of the region).

**Table 2.12: Status of final year students in South West HEIs**

	Type of respondent		
	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	OU (%)
Institution			
Arts institute, Bournemouth	2	1	–
Bath	7	0	–
Bath Spa	4	1	–
Bournemouth*	9	19	–
Bristol	15	2	–
Dartington	1	0	–
Exeter	11	1	–
Falmouth	3	7	–
Gloucestershire*	7	18	–
Plymouth*	24	50	–
Royal Agricultural College	1	0	–
St Mark and St John	3	1	–
UWE	15	2	–
Open University	–	0	100

\* these institutions purposefully provided a part-time sample for surveying — so we would expect to see such a bias in the proportion of part-time respondents attending these institutions

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

**Table 2.13: Subjects studied by final year students in South West HEIs by institution\***

Subjects	Institutions with strong subject presence
Medicine	Bristol
Health	Bournemouth, Gloucestershire, UWE, St Mark and St John
Biological/physical sciences	Bristol, Bath, Plymouth
Agricultural/veterinary sciences	Royal Agricultural College, Plymouth, UWE
Maths/stats/IT	UWE, Bournemouth, Bristol, Plymouth, Gloucestershire
Engineering/technology	Plymouth, Bath, Bristol
Social studies	Plymouth, Bristol, UWE, Exeter
Business/admin studies	Gloucestershire, UWE, Plymouth, Bournemouth
Humanities	UWE, Exeter, Plymouth, Bristol, Bath Spa, St Mark and St John
Languages	Exeter, Bristol, UWE
Creative arts/media	Arts Institute, Bath Spa, Bournemouth, Dartington, Falmouth, Plymouth
Education	Bath Spa, Exeter, Plymouth, UWE

\* full-time leavers only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

## **Part-time South West leavers**

There were 177 responses available for analysis from leavers who had studied at their institutions on a part-time basis. The majority of this group had attended the universities of Bournemouth, Gloucestershire and Plymouth.

There were many more women than men (71 and 29 per cent respectively – see Table 2.9). The vast majority were white (94 per cent), and were relatively old. More than two-thirds (69 per cent) of part-time respondents were at least 30 years old when they started their courses, and the average (mean) age at entry was 35 years old. One-third of respondents were the first member of their family to attend university or college of higher education, indicating that this group of respondents (as opposed to OU and full-time students) were the least likely to have had familial experience of higher education.

Roughly nine out of ten (88 per cent, see Table 2.10) lived in the South West before starting their courses *ie* were local students. Many were from Devon, Dorset and Gloucestershire but this reflects the fact that the sample of part-time final year students was drawn from three universities based in these localities. Most (86 per cent, see Table 2.9) part-time respondents had been in work or at a further education college before their studies, reflecting their older age profile.

The most popular courses amongst this group of respondents were health (including nursing), business and administrative studies, and creative arts and media (see Table 2.10). Again this reflects the profile of the institutions from which the part-time respondents were sampled and their older age profile. Few, only 13 per cent, part-time respondents reported that they had work experience built into their courses.

The profile of part-time respondents to the leavers survey fits closely to that developed from HESA statistics for the whole population of South West part-time students (see above).

## **Open University South West leavers**

There were 421 responses available for analysis from those who had studied with the Open University. This group, at the time of the survey, were studying courses that would take them to the required level of points equivalent to a first degree. Again, there were more women than men (but not to the extent of the part-time group) and 58 per cent of OU respondents were female (see Table 2.9). As with the part-time group, the vast majority (76 per cent) were at least 30 when they started their studies and the average (mean) age at entry was 37 years. Also the vast majority of respondents were white (99 per cent), and were local students (80 per cent, see Table 2.9) with many originating from Devon, West

of England and Gloucestershire. Many respondents (74 per cent) had familial experience of higher education. Again, these patterns closely fit population data for OU students (see above).

One in four (27 per cent, see Table 2.8) OU respondents came to their studies from looking after a home or family, from ill-health, or from retirement. Many more (a further 69 per cent) had been in work prior to their studies. The most popular broad areas for study (given that courses from across the wide range offered by the OU can be studied in any combination) were humanities, social studies, and biological and physical sciences (see Table 2.11). OU respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for taking up their studies and marginally more respondents indicated personal reasons for study than vocational (38 per cent compared with 32 per cent), however 30 per cent indicated their motives were a balanced mixture of the personal and the vocational:

*'I wanted to improve my education ... the course is very related to what I do at work and it will improve my chances of promotion.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Engineering/Technology subjects)

*'I just thought it would be nice to have some form of qualification, I always did a lot of reading and I wanted to study in a more structured way.'* (Female, Passer Through, Humanities)

## 2.3 Why did students choose the South West?

Our leavers survey asked students coming to the end of their final year of their first degree courses in South West higher education institutions about their expectations and experiences of higher education in the region. Firstly, leavers were asked to indicate how important a series of factors were to them when they were choosing to study at their particular university or college. They were asked to score the factors using a four point scale, (with 1 = not important at all and 4 = very important). Therefore the higher the score the greater the relative importance of the factor to leavers.

The most important factor, for leavers who studied either full or part time, was considered to be choice of course, which fits with previous research carried out with applicants to and students in higher education (see for example Connor *et al.*, 2001a). However, flexibility of distance study was considered the most important factor by respondents who had studied with the Open University. For this group, the convenience of open learning was relatively more important than the range of courses available (see Table 2.14).

*'The main reason for choosing the OU was the flexibility it provided – the fact that you could study and work at the same time and it gives you the chance to work at your own pace.'* (Male, Incomer, ICT)

**Table 2.14: Relative importance (mean score) of factors when choosing to study at a South West HEI**

Factors	FT tendency	FT	PT	OU
Course	Very important	3.7	3.8	3.4
General feel (visit/TV)	Very important	3.2	2.2	1.5
Location of institution	Quite important	3.1	3.3	-
Academic reputation/facilities	Quite important	3.1	2.6	2.9
Future employment/career possibilities	Quite important	2.9	2.6	2.6
Social life/facilities	Quite important	2.7	1.5	1.4
Flexibility of distance study*		-	-	3.8
Cost*		-	-	2.0
Lack of entry requirements*		-	-	1.8

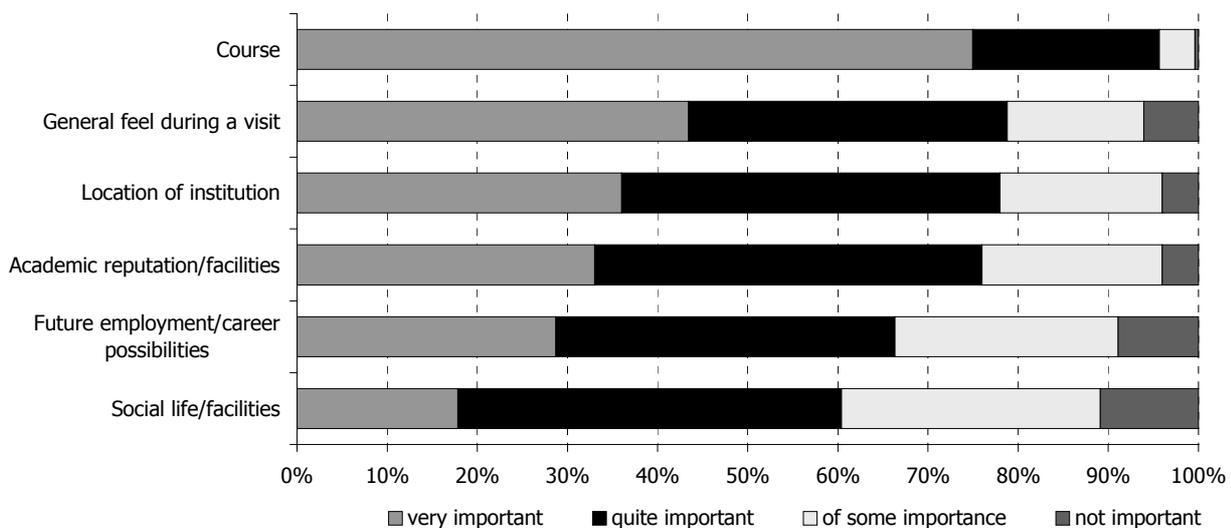
\* applicable to OU respondents only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

*'It was the only option that I knew of that offered the kind of study flexibility that I needed and that wouldn't have obliged me to have to fit in to a typical student lifestyle.'* (Female, SW Loyal, Education)

For full-time leavers the next most important factor was general feel during a visit (see Figure 2.6) which was of relatively little importance for part-time and OU respondents. Among full-time leavers, those who studied at the Universities of Bath and Exeter and at the Royal Agricultural College placed particular importance on this aspect, whereas it was much less important to leavers from the Arts Institute, Bournemouth and the Universities of Plymouth and West of England (UWE). Academic reputation and facilities were also important for full-time leavers, as was

**Figure 2.6: Relative importance of factors when choosing to study at a South West HEI\***



\* full-time leavers only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

location of institution. Location, however, was particularly important for part-time respondents. Leavers were also given the opportunity to list any other factors that they considered to be important when choosing their institutions, and these included: physical environment, accommodation, entry requirements, and quality of staff. Interestingly, for all groups of leavers (full-time, part-time and those who studied with the OU) social life and facilities were considered to be the least important factor.

It would seem, therefore, that individuals intending to follow full-time HE courses chose their universities and colleges firstly for the course(s) they offer, secondly for the general feel of the place when they visit, and because of their location and academic reputation and facilities. This was also found in the interviews with leavers, as the following comments would indicate:

*'I chose X because at that time it was the only place that did the course I wanted to do, also it was well-renowned with a strong reputation.'* (Female, SW Loyal, International Agriculture and Equine Business Management)

*'The university has a very strong reputation and that was the main reason for my choice.'* (Female, SW Loyal, International Management and Modern Languages)

*'I got tips on what to look out for and I was advised not to choose a university on the basis of how cheap the beer was but to go and have a look.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business and IT)

*'I did like the campus when I visited ... it was well laid out and very green. Id never been to the South West before and found it very pretty.'* (Female, Incomer, History and Spanish)

*'I went to the open day and liked it.. it wasn't like one of the more cut-off universities and seemed to have all the sporting things and shops but not all the traffic gridlock and busy, stressed out people like you get in London.'* (Male, Incomer, Engineering)

*'I liked the small size of the place when I visited ... the community feel, how self contained it was, it was like a mini-Butlins.'* (Female, Incomer, Public Relations and Media Studies)

The interviews indicated that location of institution could be important in terms of either distance from home, or in terms of the type of local environment offered. Some interviewees indicated that they wanted to study somewhere that was neither too close nor too far from home; and it would seem that this 'middle distance' was considered to be between two and three hours travelling time. Other interviewees wanted a place to study that was neither too quiet nor too busy; or wanted somewhere near the countryside.

*'I had heard good reports from friends I know who had been at Bournemouth. I liked the idea of living on the coast and wanted to stay in the South of England ... didn't want to go too far north and Bournemouth is only 100 miles from home.'* (Male, Lost SW Graduate, Business Communications)

*'It was convenient and close to home, two hours drive away.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Applied Statistics)

*'I didn't want to go somewhere that was stuck out in the sticks, where there would be nothing to do. I wanted somewhere that was big enough to have things to offer, but not as big as, say, Manchester.'* (Female, Incomer, Scriptwriting)

The findings from the survey of leavers showed that there was some difference noted in the relative importance of factors. Location and feel during a visit were relatively more important to women than men; and academic reputation and facilities were relatively more important to leavers from black and minority ethnic groups than to white leavers. Older leavers were much more likely than younger leavers to rate course, future employment and career possibilities, and, in particular, location, highly. Indeed for those who were working or looking after a family before studying, location was particularly important. This suggests that older leavers, particularly those with work and family in the area, may be limited in their choice of institution by their location. Academic reputation and facilities, and social life and facilities were relatively more important to younger leavers. Employment prospects and academic reputation were relatively more important to those from independent schools.

Leavers who lived in the South West region before their studies tended to place a greater importance on location of higher education institution than those who came to study from outside of the region. Those not originally from the region, however, placed relatively greater importance on social life and facilities, academic reputation and facilities, and the general impression gained from a visit.

This pattern is largely replicated when looking at importance of factors by institution attended. Leavers from institutions with a wider catchment area (eg a national market) such as the University of Bristol, the University of Bath, and the Royal Agricultural College were more likely to rate highly factors such as social life and facilities, academic reputation and facilities and future employment and career opportunities. However, this may reflect the greater likelihood that leavers in this group will originally have come from outside of the South West. Similarly, leavers from Bath Spa University College placed greater importance on location than leavers from other institutions. When looking at subject of study, location was particularly important to those who studied health, social science, humanities and education courses. However, this is likely to reflect the gender, age and domicile profile (eg largely older local women) of these subjects. Interestingly, leavers with a sandwich or work placement element to their courses were more likely to rate the importance of future employment and career prospects highly.

## 2.4 What about opportunities to work while studying?

Due to financial necessity and a willingness to build evidence of employability, a key facet of student life, post Dearing, is the practice of working while studying.

The Labour Force Survey allows some insight into regional patterns of work among students. Of the 150,000 full-time students in sixth forms, colleges and universities who live in the South West, 45 per cent are in employment. This is higher than the UK average of 39 per cent. Only in the South East do a higher proportion work while studying.

However, if we narrow our focus to those of university age (*ie* 19 and over), on full-time courses at university, polytechnic or colleges, we find that only one third (34 per cent) are in employment, close to the UK average of 36 per cent. Several other regions have a much higher proportion of their full-time university *etc.* students in work, for example Scotland (43 per cent), and the South East (40 per cent). In contrast, less than 30 per cent of students in Northern Ireland, Wales, Yorkshire and Humberside and the East Midlands work while studying.

The average number of hours worked each week ranges from 11 in the West Midlands, to 16 in Yorkshire and Humberside. Working students in the South West work around 13 hours each week, close to the UK average of 14 hours.

Clearly there are a number of factors at work, for example, the availability of suitable opportunities which allow work and full-time study to be combined, the requirement for additional income among each region's student profiles, and the cost of living in each area. However, the South West appears to offer students as many work opportunities as other regions, despite the fact that a relatively high proportion of the under 19 student population also work.

Part-time degree students are difficult to identify in the LFS. However, we can identify all those enrolled in universities, colleges of HE and the Open University. The majority of these part-time students work. In the South West, as in the UK as a whole, 90 per cent of part-time students are in employment. For those in work, full-time hours are the norm – three quarters (76 per cent) hold down a full-time job in addition to their studies, slightly lower than in the UK as a whole (80 per cent).

**Table 2.15: Student satisfaction (mean score) with their experience in South West HEIs**

	FT tendency	FT	PT	OU
Choice of course	Satisfied	4.1	4.3	4.3
Local environment**	Satisfied	4.3	4.0	-
Social life/facilities	Satisfied	4.0	3.3	3.1
Career preparation	Satisfied	3.4	3.4	3.3
Academic support/facilities	Satisfied	3.5	3.6	4.0
University/college as a whole	Satisfied	3.8	3.7	4.2
Teaching materials*		-	-	4.4
Local facilities*		-	-	3.4
Cost of study*		-	-	3.7

\* applicable to OU respondents only  
 \*\* not applicable to OU respondents

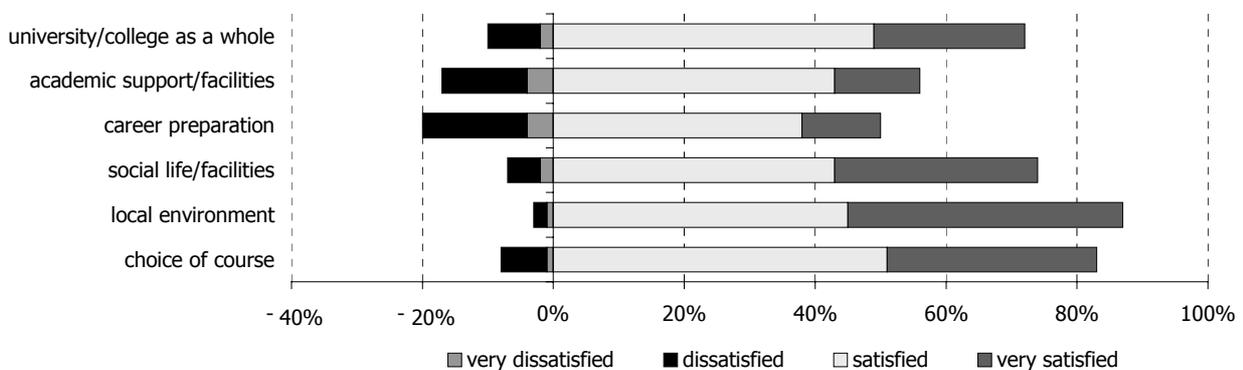
Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

## 2.5 How satisfied are South West students?

Leavers were asked to rate their higher education experience in the South West. They were asked to indicate the extent of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a series of aspects using a five point scale, (where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied). Therefore the higher the score the greater the satisfaction with a particular aspect of the higher education experience.

Generally, leavers from South West institutions were satisfied with all of the measured elements of their higher education experience (see Figure 2.7). Full-time leavers were most satisfied with the local environment followed by their choice of course (see Table 2.15), whilst part-time respondents were most satisfied with their choice of course followed by the local environment. This indicates that, in the main, leavers had enjoyed studying their courses in the South West. Local environment has little pertinence

**Figure 2.7: Satisfaction with elements of higher education experience in the South West\***



\* full-time leavers only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

to OU respondents, who by the nature of their study have no 'higher education study environment' as such. Instead, this group were most satisfied with their teaching materials followed by their choice of course and the university as a whole.

Full-time leavers were less satisfied with career preparation and academic support and facilities, whereas part-time and OU respondents were less satisfied with the social life and facilities available during their studies. This may indicate that full-time students, who tend to be younger and have less labour market experience may need greater support, and may indicate that social facilities are not targeted towards or accessible to part-time and Open University students.

Amongst full-time leavers, women generally had higher satisfaction ratings than men especially in terms of course choice, academic support and facilities and the university/college as a whole. There was little difference in satisfaction with local environment for male and female leavers, even though location tended to be regarded as more important by women. Also white leavers had higher satisfaction scores for course and locality than leavers from black and minority ethnic groups. Although location was relatively more important to older leavers than younger leavers, younger leavers tended to have higher satisfaction ratings, than their older counterparts, for the local environment. Younger leavers were also relatively happier with their career preparation and university experience.

There was little difference in satisfaction ratings of those originally from the South West and those from other areas of the UK, with exception that those from outside of the South West tended to be more satisfied with the social life and facilities on offer than local students. There was also little difference between those who intended to stay and those who intended to leave the region after their studies. However, those intending to leave were marginally more positive about their study experience in the region than those intending to remain local. This would suggest that the decision to leave is perhaps not affected by the experience of studying in the region.

Those from the universities of Bristol and Bath were the most likely to rate their local environment highly (this was also noted in the interviews with leavers, where individuals tended to be most complementary about these particular cities). Bristol leavers also scored the highest satisfaction levels for social life and facilities. However, leavers from the University of Plymouth had the lowest average satisfaction scores for locality, although these were still high. Leavers from the University of Bath and the Royal Agricultural College were the most likely to rate their institutions highly overall, and with regard to career preparation, and academic support and facilities.

Those with lower satisfaction ratings for choice of courses (though still generally very satisfied) were those who had studied maths, statistics, IT, engineering and technology and business and administrative subjects. Those who rated career preparation particularly highly were leavers who had studied medicine and education (both highly vocational courses). They were also individuals with a sandwich or work placement element to their courses.

The interviews with leavers confirmed the high level of satisfaction with studying in the South West. All interviewees reported that they had greatly enjoyed their experience of studying in the region, and the vast majority said they would have, with hindsight, made the same choices with regard to both institution and course. However, some reported that the studying had been hard work, harder than they perhaps had expected. Elements of studying in the region that leavers seemed to be particularly positive about, and that came up regularly in the discussions, were: the sense of community and the student atmosphere, the relaxed and slow pace of life, the countryside and coast, the scenery, the feeling of being safe, the cleanliness, and the climate. Many individuals focused on the opportunities to socialise and the social facilities offered by the local towns and cities and the universities themselves; this is interesting as social life was not deemed to be a key deciding factor in choosing to study in the region (see leavers survey results above). Also, as noted above, leavers were particularly positive about the cities of Bristol and Bath.

*'When I go home everything is very hectic, fast paced and chaotic. Everything is very relaxed and friendly here ... the beach is only half an hour down the road ... Dartmoor is also very close ... there are lots of pubs and sports clubs and everything is walkable.'* (Male, Incomer, Civil Engineering)

*'I really liked the campus, you don't feel depressed by your surroundings and it's warmer.'* (Female, SW Loyal, French and German)

*'The university was in the heart of the city, and the student union was big.'* (Male, Lost SW Graduate, Engineering)

*'It was really good fun. I met some really good friends. There were lots of clubs and pubs and the social life was good ... because it is a small place all the students went to the same places – there was a little student community.'* (Female, Passer Through, Biological Sciences)

*'Its picturesque but at the same time more lively than you might expect – there is lots to do.'* (Male, Passer Through, French and Spanish)

*'There are loads of good places to hang out and chill, it has a good vibe ... there are loads of pubs and clubs as well as parks and gardens.'* (Female, SW Loyal, Product Design)

*'In Bristol you've got all the nightlife you could want.'* (Female, Passer Through, Education)

*'The beaches were lovely, the locals were friendly, and it was safer to walk around by yourself too.'* (Female, Passer Through, Broadcasting)

*'I would recommend Cheltenham ... it is not a huge place, the big step of going to university for the first time (being away from your parents, managing your own money) is not as great here as it would be going somewhere like London.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, Sport and Exercise Science)

*'I absolutely loved it [studying in the South West]. Bath is such a nice city, it has the hustle and bustle of a city but it was clean and had a nicer atmosphere.'* (Female, Passer Through, English)

*'The South West has a good balance of seaside, countryside and city life.'* (Female, Incomer, Religion)

The interviews however also indicated areas where leavers had difficulties or were less satisfied, but these tended to focus on the transition to university life and were not specific criticisms of the South West region. These included, preparation for university life, finding accommodation (especially affordable and close to study locations), and a lack of tutor or pastoral support. For OU students, it was noted that there were limited opportunities to maintain contact with fellow students.

*'The vibe was that tutors didn't care and lecturers were impenetrable ... I didn't feel comfortable approaching my personal tutor.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, English)

Comments more specific to the region were: the need for a car to be able to get around certain locations and difficulties with transport links within the region, and also the higher cost of living, particularly in terms of accommodation.

## 2.6 Key points

The picture painted by the secondary data sources and our leavers' survey is remarkably consistent. The key points to note are:

- **People applying to full-time courses at university or college seriously consider the 'geography' of their choices.** Although most emphasis is put on the availability of a subject of interest, they are also very interested in the location of the university/college and employment prospects on graduation. People from the South West also prioritise the availability of accommodation for the first year, cost of living and type of site. For full-time students, the 'general feel' of the place during a visit was also important, though it was not for part-time and Open University undergraduates. Location is

particularly important for part-time students, as is the flexibility of distance study for Open University students. Older students and those originally from the South West are particularly sensitive to the location of institutions.

- **However, a relatively low proportion of potential students from the South West make applications to study in their home region**, compared with students from other regions, on a full-time basis, compared with other regions. The South East, Wales, West Midlands and London attract many applications from South Westerners.
- **But mature applicants from the South West favour their home region**, for full-time courses more than younger applicants, and those from 'professional' families.
- **The South West is also a popular place to study among full-time South Eastern applicants.**
- Applicants are generally unwilling to move very far to study, even full time. **Institutions in neighbouring regions are popular choices.**
- **Over a third of full-time students from the South West are studying in their home region** – a relatively low proportion in comparison with many regions. Students from Devon, Cornwall and West of England appear to be more tied to the South West than those in counties on the border with other regions. **The region is a net exporter of full-time students.**
- **The majority of part-time students from the South West study in their home region**, in line with most other regions. In fact, few choose universities or colleges outside of their sub-region.
- **Full-time students in South Western institutions are fairly typical of national students**, except in their ethnic profile. **Part-time and Open University students in the South West are predominantly female and more mature.** Many part-time students study subjects allied to medicine. Subject choice is highly gendered among both full and part-time students.
- **Of the universities and colleges in the South West, some can be considered local recruiters, others have a national recruitment focus**, though a number of HEIs have different recruitment strategies for full and part-time courses. Those recruited from within the region are often very local and choose universities and colleges in the same sub-region – this is especially true of part-time students.
- **National recruiters tend to take more male and younger students** than do local recruiters. Local recruiters tend to have more mature and part-time students.
- **Most full-time students have what appears to be an uninterrupted educational progression.** Two-thirds of full-time students are recruited straight from schools or sixth form colleges. However, **the majority of part-time and Open**

**University students were in work immediately before they began their course.**

- **Work experience was a feature of their degree course for half of full-time students**, and leavers with work experience rated their career preparation more highly. *Good quality work experience could be a useful way of familiarising undergraduates with the career opportunities available in the South West.*
- **The South West offers a favourable environment for higher education** – the majority of people leaving South West institutions rated their higher education experiences positively, and were particularly complimentary about their choice of course and the local environment. Full-time students also viewed the social life and facilities as meritorious, however there are indications that they may need greater support in building a career than part-time and Open University students. Interestingly, those planning to leave the region on graduation were slightly more positive about their study experiences than those planning to stay, suggesting a good experience of HE may not be sufficient to keep people in the region for a career.

### 3. Great Expectations: Leavers' Plans for and Perceptions of the Labour Market

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We now turn our attention to students studying in the South West and what they expect to be doing on graduation. In our leavers survey (of final year students in South West institutions) we asked a series of questions about what students expected to be doing in the short term, in the few months after finishing their studies, and in the long term, in three years time. The results are reported in this Chapter.

We are therefore concentrating on four groups of students from our initial grid (see Table 3.1):

- SW Loyals – *ie* students who come from, study in and expect to find employment in the South West – either on graduation or three years further on.
- Lost SW Graduates – *ie* students who come from and study in the South West but expect to work elsewhere.
- Incomers – those who come from outside the South West but studied at a South West HEI and expect to stay, and
- Passers Through – students who just come to the South West to study and do not intend to find employment there.

**Table 3.1: Typology of students' relationship to the South West**

Types of 'student'	Where from?	Where studied?	Where job?
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

Source: IES, 2002

## 3.1 Immediate employment plans

We begin by examining what students expect to be doing in the first few months after graduation. It should be noted here that we did not explore the use and influence of various sources of information on the labour market, which individuals may have used to develop their expectations. This would be an interesting avenue for further research.

### 3.1.1 Most students expect to be working

The majority of leavers who had studied full time (69 per cent) expected to be in work after finishing their studies: 25 per cent expected to be in permanent employment, 43 per cent in temporary employment, and only one per cent anticipated being self-employed (see Table 3.2). Almost twice as many full-time leavers expected to be in temporary jobs than expected to be in permanent jobs. A further eight per cent expected to be in further study and 23 per cent planned to take time out after their studies. It should be noted here that temporary jobs vary greatly in terms of the skill levels required and in terms of motivation. Jobs that respondents classified as temporary would include low skill 'money earning' posts which are intended to be taken for a short period only, jobs which act as stepping stones into more permanent positions, and highly skilled jobs which operate under fixed term contracts.

Interviews with leavers confirmed that leavers expectations of taking up temporary work after their studies were met. A wide range of temporary and often part-time positions were described during the discussions but were in the main low skill stop gap jobs.

**Table 3.2: Expected activity in the few months after finishing first degree studies**

Activity	Mode of study		
	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	OU (%)
Permanent employment	25	75	60
Temporary employment	43	8	8
Self-employment	1	7	4
<b>Total in work</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>71</b>
Further study	8	3	9
Taking time out	23	5	2
Looking after home/family	<1	1	7
Retired	NA	0	10
Looking for work	<1	0	0
Disabled/ill-health	0	0	1
<i>Base</i>	<i>3,014</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>421</i>

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

These included: bar work, waitressing, shop work, factory work, farm labouring, parking cars, litter picking, telesales, and general office work. Leavers did not intend to work in these positions for very long and did not consider them to be part of their longer term career plans. Instead leavers reported working temporarily:

- only to bide time before taking up further studies
- whilst looking and applying for a more suitable graduate level job
- to earn money either to pay off their overdrafts and loans
- to save money to enable them to travel before starting careers, or
- simply just to take some time out from making life decisions.

Some also reported that they had returned home and were living with their parents to save money, but were intending to move elsewhere, often to London, after a period of temping.

*'I needed to take a break and wanted a 9-5 job with no extra hassles. I had come to hate being a student and craved the normality of a 9-5 lifestyle.'* (Female, working in telesales in a bank)

*'... focus on earning some money rather than pursuing wider career aims, mainly to get money in my pocket.'* (Female, working as a shop assistant for a major supermarket chain)

*'... just for some spending money.'* (Male, chip shop assistant)

*'... just enough to get by for the moment and are not part of any big career plan – just to pay the bills.'* (Female, two part-time jobs as a sales assistant)

*'... it was such a relief that it was summer, I wanted to recover and prepare for applying for a PGCE.'* (Female, play scheme worker)

There may be a role here for institutions and regional agencies to generate appropriate high quality temporary work and to support leavers/new graduates in the identification and exploitation of these types of opportunities, although as we discuss later, all forms of work experience are valued and deemed beneficial by participants.

A greater proportion of respondents to the leavers survey who had either studied part-time or at a distance (with the OU) expected to be in permanent employment after finishing their studies. These individuals were likely to have been working throughout their studies and to continue to do so after completing their courses.

Among full-time leavers, women were marginally more likely than men to expect to be undertaking further study as were black and minority ethnic leavers, and those who had studied medicine, biological and physical sciences, or had followed social science

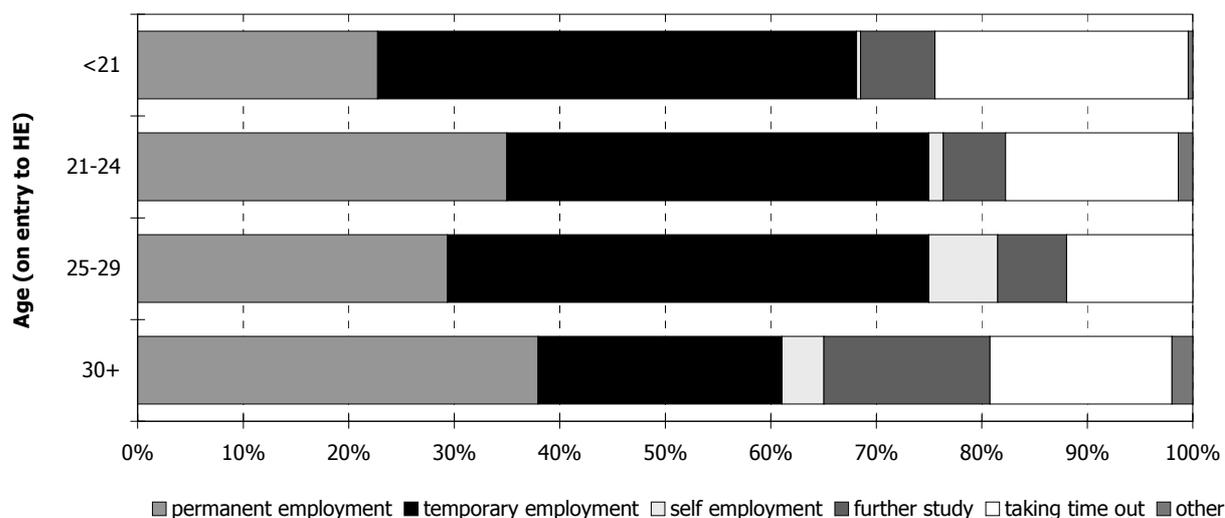
courses. Younger leavers (those aged 20 or under on entry to university or college) were less likely to expect to be in permanent employment, more likely to expect to be in temporary jobs, and also more likely to be taking time out than older leavers (particularly those aged 30 or over on entry). Self-employment and further study was more popular amongst older leavers (see Figure 3.1). Indeed the average ages (at entry to higher education) of those expecting to be in further study, permanent employment and self-employment were 21, 21 and 28 respectively, whilst the average age for those expecting to be in temporary employment and taking time out were 19 and 20 respectively.

Students who had been studying medicine, health, education, and maths/statistics/IT courses were more likely to expect to be in permanent employment after their studies than other leavers. In contrast those who had studied biological and physical sciences, humanities, creative arts and languages were more likely to anticipate working temporarily at first.

Interestingly those full-time leavers with a sandwich or work placement element to their courses were more likely to anticipate gaining permanent work and less likely to expect to be working in a temporary position after their studies, than those with no such work experience built into their studies (30 per cent compared to 21 per cent respectively anticipated permanent work, and 40 per cent compared to 47 per cent anticipated temporary working). Previous research has established that the higher expectations of those with work experience are well founded (Harvey *et al.*, 1997, Bowes and Harvey, 2000, La Valle *et al.*, 2000).

Individuals who expected to work in the ICT, engineering, marine and environmental technologies industries, and in public sector were the most likely to expect to be working permanently.

**Figure 3.1: Expected activities after studies by age group (on entry to higher education)\***



\* Full-time leavers only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

However, those who felt they would be working in the food and drink, financial and business services, leisure and tourism, and retail sectors were most likely to expect to be in temporary employment. Indeed these are sectors where temporary work tends to be concentrated. Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of all of those expecting temporary work after finishing their studies expected to be working in those sectors (excluding those that did not know what sector they would be working in). Similarly, those expecting to work as health and social welfare professionals, as public, protective and civil servants, and in the ICT and engineering professions had a greater likelihood of expecting permanent work. As would be expected the vast majority of those expecting to work in retail sales posts and in administrative and clerical roles expected to do so temporarily.

Leavers who were originally from the South West but who planned to leave the region after their studies (Lost SW Graduates) were more likely to anticipate permanent work and less likely to expect a temporary position than others. This may indicate that this group is leaving the region to take up permanent positions. However, those who decided to stay in the region after their studies are marginally more likely, than those deciding to go elsewhere, to anticipate both permanent and temporary work. This group is also much less likely to take time out than other groups.

### **3.1.2 Views on self-employment**

The interviews also confirmed the general reluctance of those coming to the end of their studies to consider self-employment as a career option. Leavers tended to think of self-employment as risky, expensive and troublesome, and consequently more of a longer term option, if at all.

*'I hadn't thought about starting my own business ... I couldn't afford it and don't want the pressure.'* (Female, Incomer, Public Relations)

*'... I don't feel that my experience and contacts are extensive enough yet for me to try it ... and my financial position is holding me back.'* (Female, Passer Through, Film and Animation)

*'... although I have done a little private consultancy from time to time, I wouldn't like to be primarily self-employed, I'm not brave enough.'* (Male, Incomer, ICT)

*'I want to learn from others first ... it is more of a long term possibility, I don't feel ready yet.'* (Male, Passer Through, International Agriculture and Equine Business Management)

*'I hope that after a few years work it might be more of a realistic option.'* (Female, Passer Through, Broadcasting)

*'... there is no way that I could start my own business, I don't have the experience ... there is no way that I would get financial backing and if*

*big companies can't survive in this climate why would a small company.'* (Male, Lost SW Graduate, Business Communications)

*'I have considered starting my own business but I didn't. I guess I lost my bottle.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Engineering and Technology part-time)

*'I don't think it is worth doing unless you have a niche/area of speciality ... it seems to be relying on others which I wouldn't like.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, English)

*'It is a lot of people's dream to have their own business but you have to have a lot of skills, confidence and ability ... you need money behind you.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business and IT)

The comments also indicate that graduates may not be aware about how to develop a self-employment option, *eg* how to access finance and put together a viable business plan *etc.*

### **3.1.3 Short-term job expectations**

Leavers were asked to indicate which occupation they realistically expected to be working as in the few months after completing their studies. Of those full-time leavers expecting to be in work (permanent, temporary or self-employed), over half (56 per cent) expected to be in professional occupations (excluding those who did not know what occupation they expected to be in). The most common occupations were:

- retail, sales or catering assistant (22 per cent); and
- administrative, clerical or secretarial assistant (16 per cent).

The high proportion expecting to be in administrative or retail jobs is largely due to those expecting to be in temporary work. More than four in five (85 and 84 per cent respectively) expecting to work in those occupations expected to do so temporarily. Conversely the most common jobs found amongst full-time leavers anticipating permanent work were: health and social welfare; business, finance and legal; teaching and academic; and ICT professions (see Table 3.3). Particularly popular occupations amongst the small group of full-time leavers expecting to be self-employed were creative and ICT professions.

Amongst part-time and OU respondents who expected to work permanently after completing their studies, the most frequently mentioned occupations were: health and social welfare professions; engineering professions; public, protective and civil service; and business, finance and legal professions. However, it should be noted that the numbers involved are relatively small.

**Table 3.3: Anticipated occupation immediately after studies (those expecting to be in work only\*)**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>FT Permanent work (%)</b>	<b>FT Temporary work (%)</b>	<b>PT Permanent work ** (%)</b>	<b>OU Permanent work (%)</b>
Health/social welfare	16	3	66	22
Teaching	11	6	1	9
Business/finance	12	7	11	6
Scientific R&D	3	3	0	5
Engineering	4	1	4	18
ICT	9	3	6	9
Public/civil servant	6	2	7	16
Creative	6	4	1	1
Sports/leisure/travel	6	6	0	<1
Marketing/sales/PR	7	4	1	2
Admin/clerical	6	24	1	9
Retail/catering	8	31	2	1
Agriculture	2	2	0	1
Construction	1	2	1	<1
Other	1	3	1	1
<i>Base</i>	<i>753</i>	<i>1,308</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>245</i>

\* excluding those who did not know what occupation they expected to be in

\*\* very small number of cases, therefore percentages are for indication only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

### Variations by gender

Anticipated occupation varied strongly with gender. Amongst all full-time leavers expecting to work (permanent, temporarily or self-employed) after their studies, women were more likely to choose the health and social welfare, and teaching and academic professions; and to select administrative, clerical or secretarial work. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to indicate business, finance and legal, ICT, and engineering professions along with the public, protective and civil service as their anticipated occupation after studying.

### Variations by age

There were also differences noted by age. Younger full-time leavers (intending to work after their studies) had a greater tendency than older leavers to select the business, finance and legal, and marketing, sales, PR and advertising professions. Younger leavers also were more likely to anticipate working in administrative and retail sales positions but this was due to their

greater likelihood of initially taking temporary work. Older full-time leavers were more likely to choose health and social welfare professions, and to a certain extent, engineering, ICT and public, protective and civil service professions. Also those that could perhaps be described as young mature entrants to higher education (those aged between 21 and 29 when they started their courses) were relatively more likely to anticipate working as teaching and academic, and as creative professionals.

### **Variations by subject of study**

Anticipated occupation, as would be expected, closely followed subject of study, especially with the more specialist and vocational courses such as: medicine, health, agricultural and veterinary sciences, maths, statistics and IT, engineering and technology, creative arts, education, and to a certain extent, business studies. For example for those full-time leavers studying health and medicine the most common anticipated occupation was health and social welfare professional. Occupation was also associated with expected industry (see below).

Interestingly, the interviews with leavers indicated that for a small group of individuals the experience or process of studying a particular subject had helped them to realise that they did not want to work in that particular field or arena. For example one interviewee who had studied chemistry decided that he didn't necessarily want to pursue chemistry as a career but wanted to retrain as a climbing instructor; another decided to enrol on a further first degree course to study fashion after completing her Bachelor degree in product design; whilst another, who had studied Sport and Exercise Science had obtained a place on a graduate management trainee scheme with a large brewery company '*instead of becoming a PE teacher which everyone expects*'. One leaver spoke of undertaking a 12 week internship with an investment bank whilst studying for his degree in Computer Assisted Engineering. The internship had given him a taste for business and had decided him against a career in IT and towards a career in management consultancy. Finally, one student spoke of using his qualification in biochemistry '*because it was considered difficult*' as a sort of passport in order to get into financial services sector as a trainee accountant. He noted that he had no intention of working as a biochemist.

### **Variation by route**

There was also some difference noted by route through higher education and into the labour market. Those originally from the region and intending to stay in the region (SW Loyals) were relatively more likely to expect to work in health and social welfare, teaching and academic and ICT professions and in retail sales than other full-time leavers. Those who came from the region

but intended to leave after their studies (Lost SW Graduates) were relatively more likely than others to anticipate working as business, finance and legal, ICT, and creative professionals. Those who came from outside the region but intended to stay in the South West (Incomers) were relatively more likely than others to be in health and social welfare professions and admin and retail sales. Lastly, those who only studied in the region (*ie* neither coming from nor intending to stay in the region – Passers Through) were more likely to expect to take up business, finance, and legal, and creative professions and administrative posts.

### **3.1.4 Short-term sector expectations**

Leavers were also asked to indicate which sector (from a list of 13) they realistically expected to be working in following their studies. As would be expected the sectors indicated were closely related to the occupations selected, and as such, patterns found for the occupational data were largely replicated in the industrial sector data.

Once again, of those full-time leavers expecting to be in work (permanent, temporary or self-employed) the most common industries anticipated were: the public sector, financial and business services, retail, leisure and tourism, creative industries and food and drink. The high incidence of work in particular sectors reflects the popularity of temporary administration and retail jobs (see above) which tend to be concentrated in the retail, food and drink, financial and business services, and leisure and tourism sectors. Indeed, these four sectors account for half (51 per cent) of all full-time leavers expecting to work after their studies, and 64 per cent of those expecting temporary work. Between three and four in five full-time leavers anticipating working in those sectors expected to do so temporarily. Conversely by far the most common jobs amongst full-time leavers anticipating permanent work were expected in the public and financial and business services sectors (see Table 3.4). Particularly popular sectors amongst the small group of full-time leavers expecting to be self-employed were the creative and ICT industries (both regional priority economic sectors).

Amongst part-time and OU respondents who expected to work permanently after completing their studies, the vast majority anticipated working in the public sector. This fits closely with their anticipated occupations (see above).

Within the group of full-time leavers expecting to be in work (permanent, temporary or self-employed) after their studies some differences in anticipated industry were noted. Female full-time leavers were more likely than their male peers to indicate that they anticipated working in the public sector, whilst male full-time leavers were marginally more likely to expect to be working in the engineering or ICT sectors.

**Table 3.4: Anticipated industry/sector after studies (those expecting to be in work only\*)**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>FT Permanent work (%)</b>	<b>FT Temporary work (%)</b>	<b>PT Permanent work ** (%)</b>	<b>OU Permanent work (%)</b>
Creative industries	8	6	1	2
ICT	7	2	3	5
Leisure/tourism	7	12	1	2
Engineering	6	3	3	15
Food and drink	4	10	2	1
Environmental technologies	2	1	0	1
Biotechnology	1	1	0	<1
Marine industries	1	1	1	1
<b>All SWRDA priority sectors</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>
Other sectors:				
Financial/business services	17	19	6	6
Retail	7	22	3	2
Public sector	34	16	75	54
Voluntary sector	1	2	1	2
Other manufacturing	2	1	3	3
Other	5	3	2	7
<i>Base</i>	<i>678</i>	<i>932</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>246</i>

\* excluding those who did not know what industry they expected to be in

\*\* very small number of cases, therefore percentages are for indication only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

More pronounced differences were noticed by age. Older full-time leavers were more likely than younger leavers to expect to be working in the engineering sector, creative industries and the public sector. Conversely, younger leavers were more likely to anticipate working in financial and business services, in leisure and tourism and in the retail sector. This, once again, is due to their greater likelihood of initially taking temporary work (which as noted above is concentrated in these sectors).

Anticipated industry (like occupation) also differs along subject lines. For example, for those full-time leavers studying health and medicine the most common anticipated industry is the public sector.

Again, there were slight differences in anticipated industrial sector amongst full-time leavers by route through higher education and into the labour market, against the grid set out in Table 3.1. The patterns largely follow those found for occupation:

- SW Loyals were relatively more likely to expect to work in the retail and public sectors than other full-time leavers.

- Lost SW Graduates were relatively more likely than others to anticipate working in the financial and business services sector.
- Incomers were relatively more likely than others to be in leisure and tourism industries and in the public sector, and
- Passers Through were more likely to expect to be in the financial and business services, and in creative industries.

Of the 13 sectors listed in the question put to leavers, eight had been identified by SWRDA as being of particular importance to the region: engineering, biotechnology, environmental technologies, marine industries, ICT, food and drink, leisure and tourism, and creative industries. Of all the full-time leavers expecting to be in work after their studies, 30 per cent anticipated working in the these key sectors, this rises to 33 per cent (one-third) for those expecting to be in permanent work (see Table 3.4). A smaller proportion of part-time and OU respondents were expecting to work in the key industries.

Amongst full-time leavers expecting to be working after their studies, the anticipated likelihood of working in the priority sectors was greater for male and for older leavers. It was also greater amongst those who had studied maths, statistics, IT, engineering, technology or creative arts; and amongst those anticipating working in scientific research and development posts, and as engineering, ICT, creative, and sports and leisure professionals. Interestingly, those intending to stay in the region SW Loyals and Incomers were less likely to anticipate working in the key industries than those who intended to leave (Passers Through and particularly Lost SW Graduates). This underlines the value of local employers marketing vacancies in the priority economic sectors. There are two messages to convey. Firstly, to those graduates already committed to the South West, many of whom have not considered working in these industries, market the sectors to improve their profile and appeal. Secondly, to those graduates already interested in these sectors, stress the opportunities available within the region.

### **3.1.5 Salary expectations**

Leavers were also asked to give their 'realistic' anticipated annual gross salary after their studies (to the nearest thousand and excluding bonuses and other financial benefits). The range of expected salaries was wide, with some anticipating payments that were either extremely low or extremely high. To take account of the potential influence of these 'outliers' (extreme values) on the vast majority of responses, a median value was used when analysing expected salaries as it is a measure of central tendency that is least sensitive to outlying values.

The average (median) salary for full-time leavers expecting to be in work was £12,500 (see Table 3.5). However, for those expecting to be in permanent work after their studies the average was £16,000, for those expecting to work temporarily the average was £11,000 and for those expecting to be self-employed the average annual salary was £15,000. The average expected salary amongst part-time student respondents was higher at £20,000 and for OU respondents was higher still at £21,000. This reflects their greater likelihood of working in permanent positions and their probable greater labour market experience.

Amongst all full-time leavers anticipating working (permanent, temporary or self-employment) after their studies, the expected initial annual salaries varied across a number of variables. Female leavers had a lower average anticipated salary than male leavers (£12,000 compared to £13,000), this may reflect women's lower expectations (or more realistic expectations) of the labour market. Indeed, female full-time leavers anticipated salaries were lower than their male peers regardless of whether they expected to work permanently, temporarily or in self-employment. Younger leavers also had a lower average anticipated salary compared to their older peers, those aged 20 or below when they started their courses expected £12,000 on average, whilst those aged 30 or over at entry to higher education had an average salary expectation of £16,500. As with the pattern for part-time and OU respondents, this is largely due to young leavers greater propensity for temporary work and their relative lack of labour market experience. However, the pattern holds true even when holding expected activity constant (*ie* expecting to work permanently or temporarily) which indicates the influence of labour market experience on anticipated salary.

**Table 3.5: Average anticipated annual salary of those expecting to work after their studies**

	Median salary (£)	No.
Full-time leavers		
Permanent	16,000	735
Temporary	11,000	1,079
Self-employed*	(15,000)	16
All expecting to be in work	12,500	1,830
PT respondents expecting to be in work	20,000	130
OU respondents expecting to be in work	21,000	276

\* very small number of cases, therefore figures are for indication only

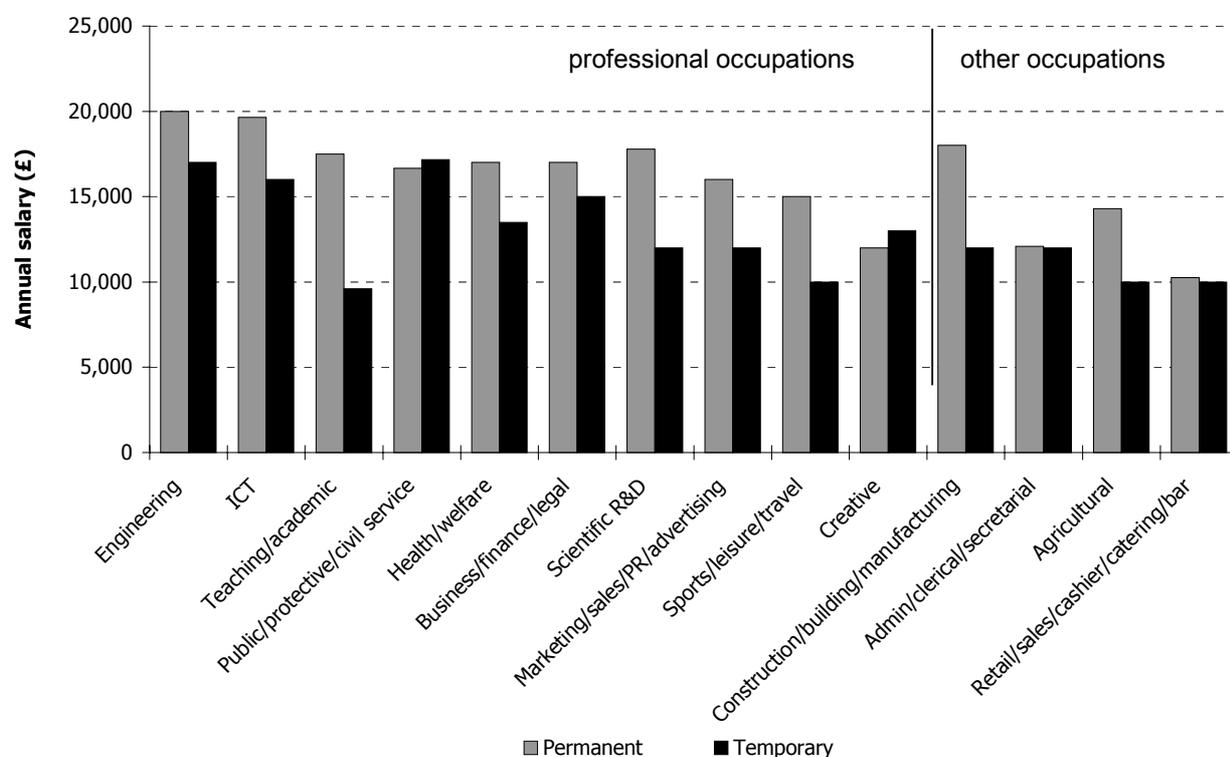
Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

## Variation by anticipated occupation and sector

Expected occupation and industry would seem to influence the anticipated salary (see Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3). Full-time leavers who anticipated working as engineering, or ICT professionals had the greatest anticipated average annual salaries (£18,900, £18,000), and this holds true for both expected permanent work and temporary work. Alternatively those expecting to work in retail sales jobs had the lowest salary expectations (£10,000), and average expectations varied little between those expecting to work temporarily (£10,000) or permanently (£10,300) in such roles. Other occupations with lower average anticipated salaries were: agricultural workers (£10,000 temporary, £14,300 permanent, and £11,000 overall); admin and clerical workers (£12,000, £12,100, and £12,000); and sports, leisure and travel professionals (£10,000, £15,000, and £12,000). Those expecting to work as creative professionals also anticipated lower average salaries than many other full-time leavers (£12,000), and interestingly those expecting to work temporarily in such roles had greater salary expectations than those expecting to work permanently (£13,000 and £12,000 respectively).

Corresponding with the patterns noted above, those full-time leavers expecting to work in ICT, engineering, marine and biotechnology industries had the highest average annual salary expectations (£18,800, £18,000, £17,200 and £16,200 respectively);

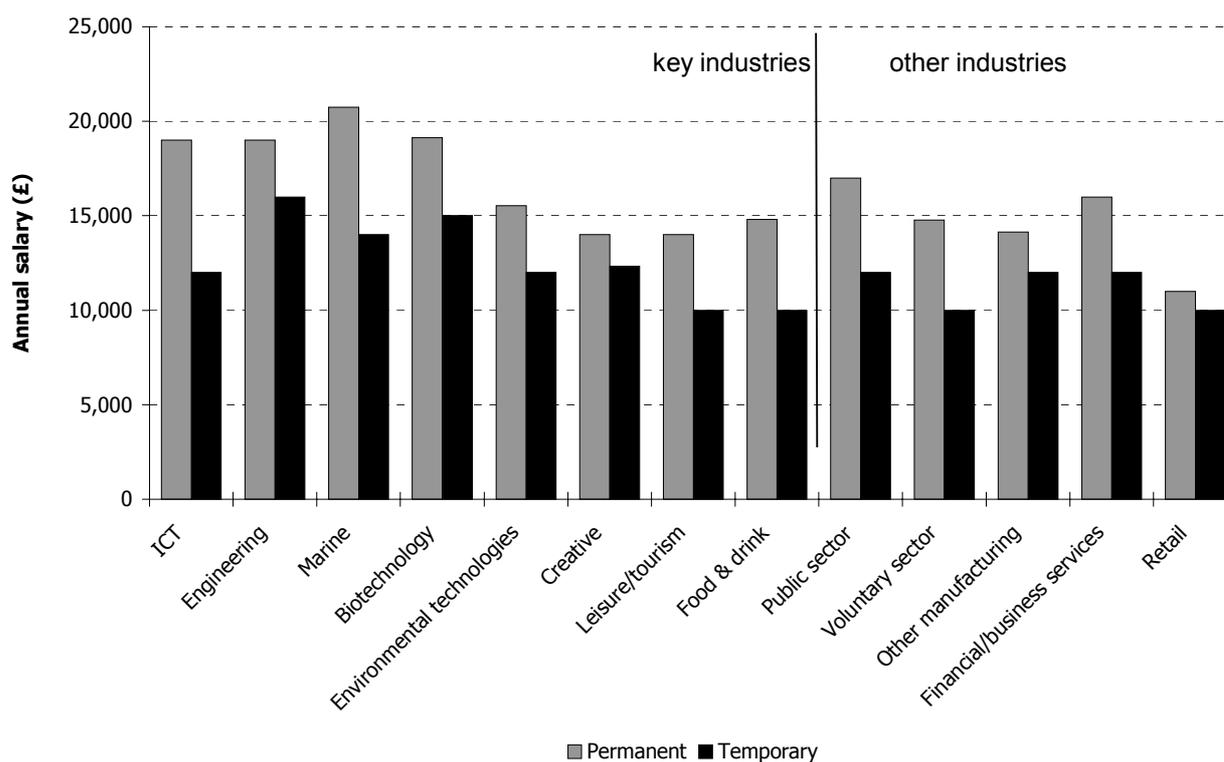
**Figure 3.2: Anticipated salary after studies by expected occupation\***



\* all full-time leavers expecting to be in work — permanent, temporary or self-employed

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

**Figure 3.3: Anticipated salary after studies by expected industrial sector\***



\* all full-time leavers expecting to be in work — permanent, temporary or self-employed

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

and those expecting to work in retail, food and drink, leisure and tourism, and creative industries had the lowest expectations (£10,000, £10,000, £12,000 and £12,000 respectively). These patterns largely hold true for both permanent and temporary work (see Figure 3.3).

Again, following the patterns of industry and occupation, expected salaries also varied with subject of study. Full-time leavers who had studied medicine, engineering and technology, education, health, maths, statistics, and IT related subjects had the greatest average expected salaries. Conversely those with the lowest average anticipated salaries after studies were full-time leavers who had followed courses in biological and physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, languages and creative arts – reflecting their greater propensity for temporary work which, on the whole, is less well paid. Generally, full-time leavers who studied science subjects had greater expected annual salaries than those who had followed arts courses (£14,000 compared to £12,000). This is due to differences in expected salaries amongst permanent workers as those science leavers expecting to work temporarily have the same average anticipated salary as arts leavers.

## Salary expectations lower among South West job-seekers

Students in our leavers survey who expected to stay in the South West to work had lower salary expectations than those who expected to move away for work.

Individuals originally from the South West and who intended to stay in the region (SW Loyals) and those not from the region before their studies but had decided to stay in the region after their studies (Incomers) had the lowest salary expectations, a median average of £12,000. SW Loyals also had the lowest average expected salary amongst those expecting to work temporarily initially. The group that had the highest salary expectations were Lost SW Graduates, individuals who although originally from the region intended to leave after their studies. However, it was Passers Through who had the greatest average expected salary amongst those expecting to gain permanent employment after their studies.

Exploring this pattern a little further shows that those full-time leavers who intend to work outside of the region (regardless of their initial region of origin) had greater average anticipated salaries, whether anticipating permanent or temporary work, than those expecting to stay. Those expecting to work in London and the South East had the greatest average anticipated salaries across both temporary and permanent salary expectations but the difference was particularly marked for permanent salaries. The average anticipated salary amongst full-time leavers expecting to stay in the region to work permanently was £15,000 compared to £17,500 for those expecting to work in London and the South East. The corresponding figures for temporary work are £10,000 for stayers and £12,000 for those drawn to London and South East. We know that London and the South East are popular destinations among those expecting to leave the South West, and as we will discuss in Chapter 5, new graduate salaries are indeed higher there than in the South West and most other regions. It would seem therefore that the pattern of salary expectations of final year students are fairly realistic.

## 3.2 Longer-term employment plans

We can also examine students' more longer-term job expectations (*ie* three years after finishing their first degree) and see whether they are significantly different from their immediate plans.

Interviews with leavers highlighted the positive attitude that individuals had towards their future careers, with the vast majority envisaging moving from their temporary jobs to more permanent, rewarding and career jobs. Most of those interviewed had some ideas about where they expected to be in three years time whether it related to location, size of company, type of role, occupation or sector; and a few individuals were very specific and

had clear career aims. Many of the leavers interviewed anticipated being in some kind of management role in three years time, whilst some talked of working in London, and others talked of spending some time working abroad.

*'...teaching in a primary school in Cornwall.'* (Female, SW Loyal, English)

*'I have to move to London if I want to pursue the career of my choice ... I'd like to be in London working for a large media company in digital TV.'* (Male, Lost SW Graduate, Business Communications)

*'... working for a medium to large company, possibly international, working towards senior management, in London.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business and IT)

*'... to be on a graduate training scheme with a good company, to have a job that would enable me to travel abroad, really to have a clearer idea about what I want to do.'* (Female, SW Loyal, Management and Languages)

Only a few had no real ideas about their future careers at all.

### 3.2.1 More expect to be in permanent jobs

The survey of leavers showed that the numbers and proportions expecting to be in permanent employment increases substantially amongst full-time leavers although the picture remains relatively stable for part-time and OU respondents (see Table 3.6). Looking three years ahead, nearly nine out of ten full-time first degree students expect to be in permanent work. The increase is largely due to the expected transition from temporary to permanent work

**Table 3.6: Expected activity three years after finishing first degree studies**

Activity	Mode of study		
	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	OU (%)
Permanent employment	86	81	66
Temporary employment	1	1	4
Self-employment	5	7	5
<b>Total in work</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>74</b>
Further study	6	6	9
Taking time out	2	2	1
Looking after home/family	<1	0	2
Retired	<1	1	12
Looking for work	<1	0	0
Disabled/ill-health	0	0	<1
<i>Base</i>	<i>2,990</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>409</i>

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

– 87 per cent of those who expected to be working temporarily after their studies anticipated that they would be in permanent work after three years. The proportion of full-time leavers anticipating being self-employed also increases when looking three years into the future (from only one per cent after studies to six per cent three years on). This is in line with results from the interviews with a subset of leavers who indicated that self-employment was considered an option for the longer term, if at all.

Temporary work no longer figures as a work option for South West graduates three years into their careers. This indicates that leavers tend to envisage temporary jobs as money earning ‘stop gap’ and ‘stepping stone’ jobs that play no part in their longer term careers, rather than legitimate ‘graduate level’ jobs, which was largely borne out in the interview discussions with a subset of leavers.

As the vast majority of full-time leavers expect to be in permanent work after three years, there is very little difference noticed within the full-time leavers group. The few variations noted were that:

- male full-time leavers were more likely to anticipate being self-employed than their female peers three years after leaving higher education
- differences in proportions expecting to be in permanent work by age have largely evened out, and indeed, in three years time, a marginally greater proportion of younger leavers expect to be in permanent employment than do older leavers
- self-employment was still also relatively more popular three years on amongst older rather than younger full-time leavers
- self-employment is also more popular amongst those who followed creative arts and engineering and technology courses
- further study is still popular amongst those who had studied biological and physical sciences.

Further study was also relatively more popular amongst those expecting to work in the biotechnology sector and marine industries than in other sectors; and amongst those expecting to work as scientific research and development professionals. Self-employment, on the other hand, was still more common amongst those anticipating working in creative industries, and anticipating working as creative professionals and as sports, leisure and travel professionals.

Differences noticed immediately after studies, when looking at leavers original location, planned location, and route through higher education, largely disappear when looking at expectations for three years time.

### 3.2.2 Occupation three years on

Three years after finishing their studies, the majority (96 per cent) of full-time leavers (who expected to be in work) expected to be in professional occupations. This may be slightly optimistic when compared to the outcomes measured in longitudinal studies (DfEE-CSU-AGCAS-IER 1999, Connor *et al.*, 1997). The most commonly predicted occupations were:

- business, finance and legal (19 per cent)
- creative (14 per cent)
- teaching and academic occupations (14 per cent), and
- marketing, sales, PR and advertising professions (11 per cent).

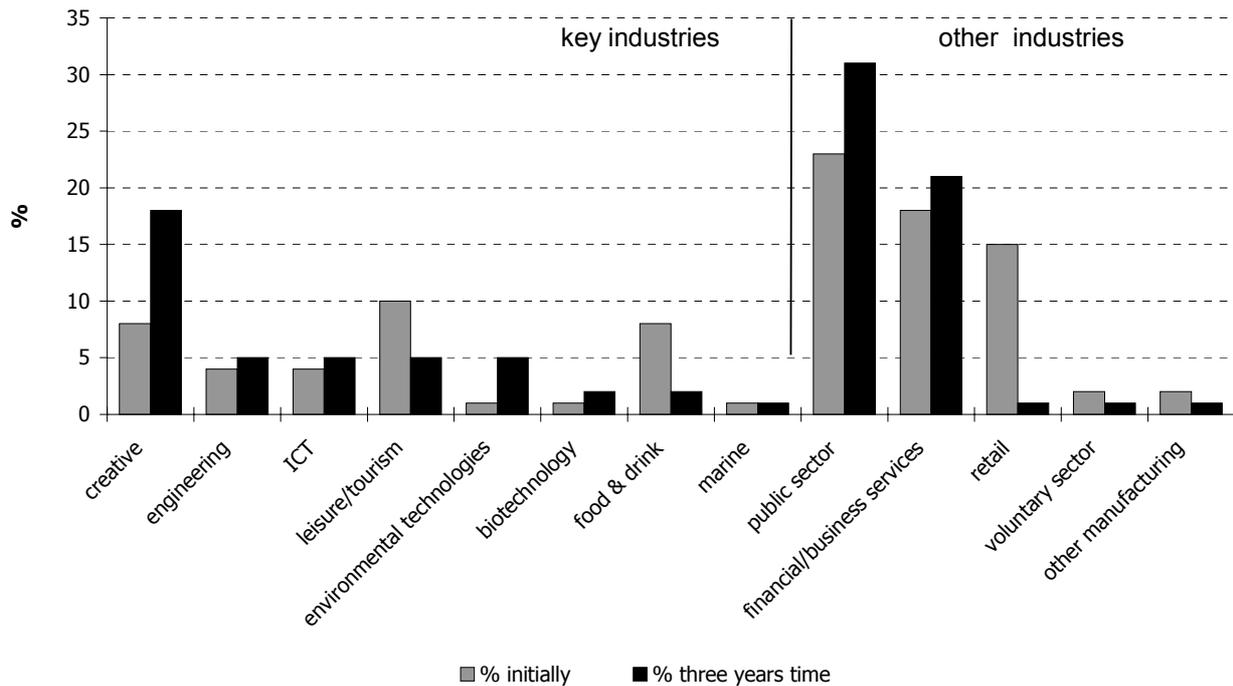
All of these occupations were more popular in three years time, than immediately after higher education (see Figure 3.4). Very few (only one per cent) leavers (whether they had studied full-time, part-time or with the OU) anticipated working in retail sales or administrative and clerical posts after three years. This reflects the anticipated move from largely temporary to largely permanent posts over the three year period.

Looking at anticipated occupation in the longer term, those expecting to work in 'business, finance and legal', 'marketing, sales, PR and advertising', creative and ICT professional occupations were more likely to believe that they would be based outside of the South West in three years time. What we cannot tell is whether these leavers feel 'pushed' out of the region due to poor perceived opportunities in these particular occupations, or 'pulled' by personal circumstances and preferences.

Again popular occupations amongst part-time respondents expecting to be working in three years time were: health and social welfare professional and business, finance and legal professional. The health and social welfare professions were also popular with OU respondents as were teaching and academic professional posts.

Anticipated occupation was still heavily influenced by gender and age, even looking three years into the future, with patterns largely following those found for permanent work in the months following studies (see above). Subject too, continued to influence choice of occupation three years into careers suggesting that few anticipate deviating from their chosen specialism even after several years in the labour market. However, business, finance and legal occupations have increased their draw from social science, languages, and maths, statistics and IT courses.

**Figure 3.4: Anticipated occupation – initially and three years after studies\***



\* all full-time leavers expecting to be in work — permanent, temporary or self-employed

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

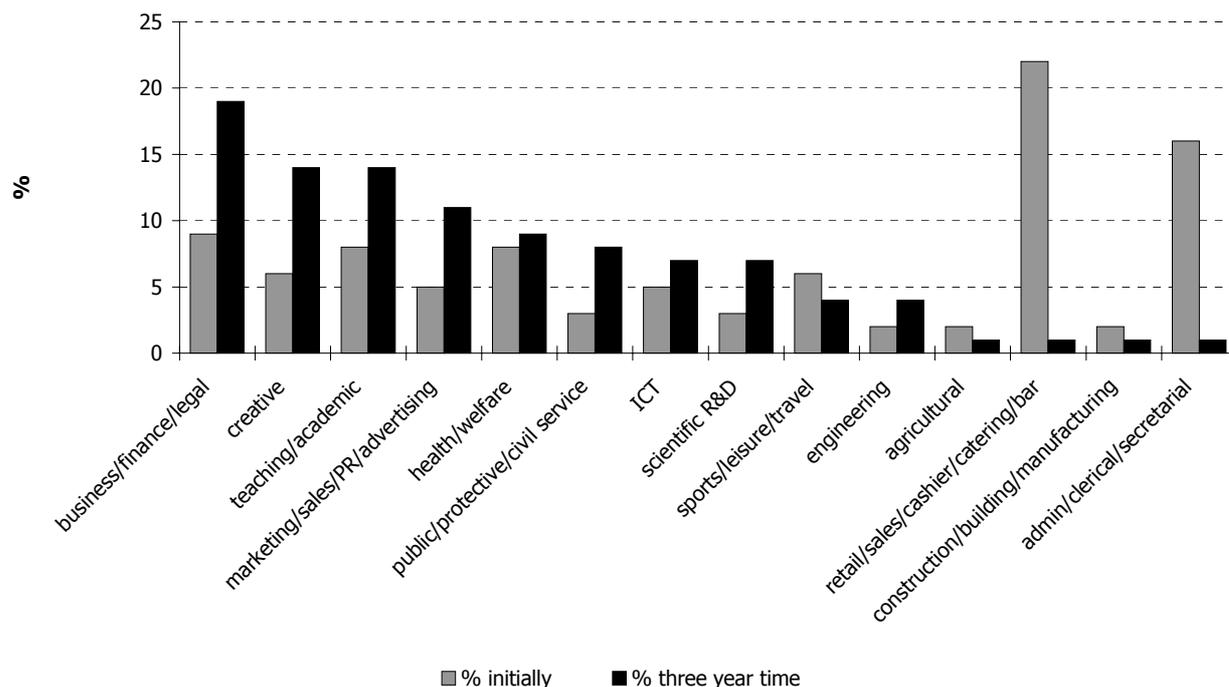
Relatively popular occupations for full-time leavers who intend to be in the region in three years time, were health and social welfare, and teaching and academic professions. This corresponds to the patterns noticed for SW Loyals and for Incomers on leaving their universities and colleges. Those who expected to be working in London in three years time were hoping to break into business, finance, legal, creative, marketing, sales, PR, advertising and ICT occupations.

### 3.2.3 Sector three years on

Corresponding with the anticipated occupational profile of leavers, the most common industrial sectors in which full-time leavers expected to be working in three years time were: the public sector, creative industries, and the financial and business services sector (see Figure 3.5). Few full-time leavers anticipated working in the food and drink, leisure and tourism and retail sectors – sectors that were popular following completion of their higher education studies. Again this reflects the anticipated move from largely temporary to largely permanent posts over the three year period. The public sector remains the most popular anticipated sector for part-time and OU respondents.

Gender, age, subject of study and anticipated occupation continued to influence the expected industry of full-time leavers three years in the future, in the same ways they had done in the months following completion of studies. In terms of location,

**Figure 3.5: Anticipated occupation — initially and three years after studies\***



\* all full-time leavers expecting to be in work — permanent, temporary or self-employed

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

amongst those intending to be in the region in three years time (either staying or returning) the public sector was a particularly common anticipated industry. This corresponds with expectations for the months following full-time leavers studies in that the public sector was a popular destination for those intending to stay in the region (SW Loyals and Incomers).

### Working in the priority sectors

In three years time, almost two in five (38 per cent) full-time leavers, who expect to be in work, anticipated working in the SWRDA priority sectors. This represented a slight increase from 30 per cent in the first few months after studies. Male full-time leavers were still more likely than their female peers to expect to work in the key sectors, however the difference noticed by age group had largely disappeared. It is interesting to note that those expecting to be in the region in three years time (either staying or returning) are still relatively less likely to anticipate working in the key sectors than other groups of full-time leavers.

### 3.2.4 Salary expectations three years on

Leavers' salary expectations for three years time were unsurprisingly more optimistic. For all full-time leavers expecting to be in work the average (median) anticipated salary had increased from £12,500 in the few months after studying to £22,000. This represents an increase of 76 per cent. The expected

increase is not quite as dramatic as it seems, as in the main, it illustrates the anticipated move from temporary (and correspondingly low paid) work to permanent work. Comparing like with like, shows that anticipated permanent salaries were expected to increase from an average of £16,000 to £22,000, or by 38 per cent, in the three-year period. However, over the same period, the average salary for those anticipating self-employment increased from £15,000 to £25,000, an increase of 67 per cent. Interestingly, amongst full-time leavers who expected their salaries to increase in three years time, the average anticipated increase was £9,000.

Part-time and OU respondents also expected their salaries to increase after three years. However, they expected a more modest increase of 19 and 14 per cent respectively (those expecting permanent work) than leavers who had studied at their institutions full-time. This may be because many have remained with their employer throughout their studies, and anticipate staying on for the medium term.

Once again the patterns found for initial expectations largely remained stable for future salary expectations. Female full-time leavers still expected lower salaries (on average) than their male peers. However, the gap between male and female average salary expectations had narrowed when leavers looked to the future. Also the group of younger leavers (those aged 20 or under at entry to higher education *ie* more traditional students) had caught up with their older peers in terms of salary expectations further into their careers. Indeed, in three years time younger full-time leavers anticipating working in a permanent post expected to earn more than their older counterparts. This indicates that younger leavers expected their salaries to grow faster than older leavers in the three-year period.

Occupations with the highest average anticipated salaries three years in the future were similar to those in the few months after finishing studies *ie* engineering and ICT professions. However, three years in the future, business, finance, legal, marketing, sales, PR and advertising professions were also perceived as occupations providing the highest salaries (see Table 3.7). Creative occupations initially had among the lowest anticipated average salaries (even amongst those expecting permanent posts), after three years leavers in these posts expected the greatest proportional increase in salary.

Patterns of anticipated future salaries across industrial sectors also followed initial expectations. Sectors with the highest average anticipated salaries were still the ICT, engineering and marine industries (see Table 3.8). However, following the salary patterns found by occupation (see above), three years in the future the financial and business services sector was also perceived as providing higher salaries. The retail and food and drink sectors

**Table 3.7: Average (median) anticipated salary – initially and three years on – by anticipated occupation**

<b>Expected occupation*</b>	<b>Initially (£)</b>	<b>Three years on (£)</b>	<b>% increase</b>
ICT	19,600	27,000	37
Marketing/sales/PR/advertising	16,000	25,000	<b>56</b>
Business/finance/legal	17,000	25,000	<b>47</b>
Construction/building/manufacturing	18,000	25,000	39
Engineering	20,000	25,000	25
Public/protective/civil service	16,700	22,000	32
Creative	12,000	20,000	<b>67</b>
Sports/leisure/travel	15,000	20,000	33
Health/welfare	17,000	20,000	18
Teaching/academic	17,500	20,000	14
Scientific R&D	17,800	20,000	12
Retail/sales/cashier/catering/bar	10,300	18,000	<b>75</b>
Admin/clerical/secretarial	12,100	17,800	<b>47</b>
Agricultural	14,300	17,100	20
<b>All (full-time leavers expecting permanent work)</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>38</b>
<i>Base</i>	<i>690</i>	<i>2,190</i>	

\* all full-time leavers expecting permanent work

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

too recorded high average future anticipated salaries although the numbers of full-time leavers expecting to be in these sectors in three years time were small and had fallen substantially.

Looking ahead three years, those that expect to be in the region (*ie* staying or returning) still had lower salary expectations than those who intended to leave the region, particularly those that intend to locate in London or the South East (£20,000 compared to £25,000).

### **3.3 Mapping routes through the region**

Leavers were asked to note their main place of residence before they applied to their university or college, and were also asked indicate their expected location in the few months after finishing their studies. The responses to these questions were used to calculate individuals 'route' through higher education and into the labour market, and resulted in four groups (see Table 3.9). All of the individuals in each of the groups, due to the nature of the sample *ie* leavers from South West HEIs, had studied in the region.

**Table 3.8: Average (median) anticipated salary (£) – initially and in three years time – by anticipated industry**

<b>Expected occupation*</b>	<b>Initially (£)</b>	<b>Three years on (£)</b>	<b>% increase</b>
Financial/business services	16,000	26,000	<b>63</b>
Food & drink	14,200	25,000	<b>76</b>
Engineering	19,000	25,000	32
ICT	19,000	25,000	32
Biotechnology	19,200	24,500	28
Retail	11,000	24,200	<b>120</b>
Marine	20,700	22,700	10
Leisure/tourism	14,000	20,000	<b>43</b>
Creative	14,000	20,000	<b>43</b>
Other manufacturing	14,100	20,000	<b>41</b>
Voluntary sector	14,800	20,000	35
Environmental technologies	15,500	20,000	29
Public sector	17,000	20,000	18
<b>All (full-time leavers expecting permanent work)</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>38</b>
<i>Base</i>	<i>662</i>	<i>2,108</i>	

\* all full-time leavers expecting permanent work

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

### South West Loyals

South West Loyals are those who originally came from the South West and intended to stay in the South West in the few months after their studies. This was the largest group in the survey, and accounted for one-third (33 per cent) of all full-time leavers, and the majority of part-time and OU respondents (84 and 79 per cent respectively). They are most likely to be white (97 per cent), female (56 per cent), older (mean age at entry of 22 years old), and to have entered higher education after working or attending a further education college (25 and 24 per cent respectively). They are also more likely than the other groups to be the first member of their family to go to university or higher education college (30 per cent). They are relatively more likely than others to have attended Bath Spa University College, the College of St Mark and St John, and Gloucestershire and Plymouth universities, and to have followed education courses. They were less concerned, than other groups, with the general feel during a visit, and with the academic reputation and facilities and the social life and facilities offered by the institutions when selecting a university or college.

Instead location is particularly important to this group, both in terms of location of study and location of employer. Indeed interviews with leavers indicate that SW Loyals have a strong

**Table 3.9: Route through higher education and into the labour market by mode of study**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Location before studies</b>	<b>Study location</b>	<b>Anticipated location after studies</b>	<b>Full-time (%)</b>	<b>Part-time (%)</b>	<b>OU (%)</b>
SW Loyal	SW	SW	SW	33	84	79
Lost SW Graduate	SW	SW	Elsewhere	10	4	2
Incomer	Elsewhere	SW	SW	18	6	18
Passer Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere	39	6	2
<i>Base</i>				<i>2,989</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>391</i>

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

attachment to the region often due to family and friends and other commitments like home and jobs. Studying near home tended to be important to this group, as was the beauty and relaxed nature of the local environment, and the 'smaller' feel of the local institutions and urban centres.

*'I wouldn't have applied to anywhere that was a long way away from home.'* (Female, Modern Languages)

*'It was the only place which did the course I wanted to do but it was also only eight miles from home which was important.'* (Female, International Agriculture and Equine Business Management)

*'I like living and studying in the South West and definitely want to stay here. It is not rushed like London city life, I have lots of family and friends in the area and I grew up here.'* (Female, English)

Sally was 45 when she started her part-time first degree course in Health at Plymouth University. Before her course she lived in Bath and was working full-time. She continued working in this job whilst studying and plans to carry on in the job after her studies, and therefore to stay in the South West *'I have always lived in the South West and have a full-time job here. I would only move if my husband was to be moved in his job'*.

Anne was 32 when she entered Exeter University to study for a full-time first degree in education. Prior to her studies she had lived locally in Devon and had been looking after her family. She intends to stay in the area after her studies because of her family commitments, and expects to gain permanent work as an educational professional.

Lisa started studying with the Open University in her 30's. She studied several different modules including education, sociology and music. She worked in a local FE college whilst studying and continues to work there now. When she left school she had a place at UWE to study for a BEd but decided against this as she felt that she would not fit in. It was much later that she decided to apply to university again and felt that the OU would be a good idea as it would offer her study flexibility and would not oblige her to fit in to a typical student lifestyle. She hopes her new qualification will enable her to take on more responsibilities in her current job.

## Lost SW Graduates

Lost SW Graduates are those who were originally from the region but who planned to leave after their studies. This was the smallest group accounting for ten per cent of full-time leavers, only four per cent of part-time respondents, and two per cent of OU respondents. This group is the only one of the four covered by the leavers survey which had men as the majority (52 per cent). However, like all of the groups, the group are predominantly white (95 per cent). Lost SW Graduates tend to be younger (mean age at entry of 19 years) and come to higher education from school or sixth form (36 and 28 per cent respectively). They are relatively more likely to have studied creative arts, and to have attended the Arts Institute, Bournemouth University and Plymouth University.

Tom was 18 when he started at Plymouth University on a first degree full-time Humanities course. Before his course, he lived in Bristol and attended a sixth form college. Both his parents and members of his wider family had also attended university or college. He intends to leave the region after his studies, anticipating travelling before looking for work in the ICT sector. His reasons for leaving the South West were given as *'better employment, salary and interesting jobs in other areas, and I am probably going abroad for a few years'*.

Julia was 28 when she entered the University of Gloucestershire to follow a first degree course in IT on a part-time basis. She was living in Gloucestershire and only applied to the university as it offered the course she wanted within travelling distance of her home. At the time of applying for the course she was working, and she continued to do so throughout her studies. After her studies she intends to leave the South West and intends to move to the West Midlands to gain permanent work in the ICT sector. She notes that she will be leaving the region *'to find a better paying job'*.

Emma was 18 when she began her course in Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Gloucestershire. She chose the university because it was close to home and friends and because it felt safe, and was a small city. She loved her time at university and is now on a graduate management trainee scheme for a large national brewery chain. She would prefer to be in the South West but is currently working in the South East as she has to go where her employer posts her. She hopes to be able to move back to the South West and imagines running a pub on the Seafront in the region when she is older.

## Incomers

Incomers, *ie* those who came to study from outside of the South West and had decided to stay in the South West after leaving their university or college, accounted for 18 per cent of full-time leavers and six per cent of part-time respondents. However, this route was relatively more common amongst OU respondents, accounting for 18 per cent of this group. The group is equally split along gender lines, so there is no preponderance of either men or women. They are likely to be white but, like Lost SW Graduates

and Passers Through, there is a greater proportion of black and minority ethnic individuals and individuals of mixed race than found amongst SW Loyals (five per cent compared with three per cent). This group are likely to be young (mean age on entry of 19 years) and to have entered higher education direct from school or sixth form college (44 and 25 per cent respectively). This group are the most likely to have had familial experience of higher education (84 per cent), in that at least one other member of their family has attended a university or college. They are relatively more likely to have studied medicine or health subjects and to have attended Bristol University or the University of the West of England.

Tracey was 19 when she started her full-time first degree course in social studies at the University of West of England. Before her studies she had lived in Surrey, on the outer edge of London, and had applied for higher education whilst at school. Several members of her family have experience of higher education. She intends to stay in the South West after her studies as *'Bristol is a brilliant city and more affordable than London'*, and expects to get temporary work initially.

Paul was 19 when he started his full-time medical studies degree course at Bristol University Medical School. He originally came from Hampshire but prior to his studies he had taken a gap year and was working in West Africa. His parents and siblings have also attended university or college. He plans to stay in the region after his studies and expects to gain permanent work as a health professional. He notes *'I like Bristol and think there are good job prospects there'*.

Dawn was 18 when she entered Bournemouth University to study Scriptwriting. She chose Bournemouth because although it was a long way from her parental home in Merseyside she considered it to be the best institution offering the course she wanted to do. She really enjoyed her time in the South West and has decided to stay there because *'I really enjoy living here, it is a lively and friendly place that is bigger than my hometown... I like living near the sea and the atmosphere this creates'*. She is currently working in customer services for a large bank, a large local employer. She expects to be working in her current job for the time being and has no plans to leave.

### **Passers Through**

Passers Through are those who neither came from the South West nor intended to stay in the South West after their studies. This was the most common route for full-time leavers accounting for almost two in five leavers (39 per cent). It was, however, relatively uncommon amongst part-time and OU respondents (only six and two per cent respectively). Members of this group are more likely to be female (52 per cent), white (95 per cent), and tend to be younger than all the other groups (mean entry age of 18 years old). They are the most likely group to have come to university via school, and have the greatest proportion coming from an independent school. Conversely, this group is least likely to have previously been in work or have attended a further education

college. Passers Through are relatively more likely to have studied languages, and have attended Bath, Bristol or Exeter universities.

Sarah comes from Oxfordshire and her parents have experience of higher education. She was 19 when she entered the University of Bristol to follow a first degree course in languages. However, before starting at university she had taken a gap year. She does not intend to stay in the South West after completing her course *'I want a change of scene, I will be moving to London'*. She expects to undertake further study and eventually to gain work in the financial and business services sector.

Kelly was 18 when she started at the University of Bristol to study a first degree (full-time) in the field of biological and physical sciences. Several members of her family have attended university including her parents, siblings and wider family members. Before her studies, Kelly lived in East Anglia and attended a state school. She intends to leave the South West after her studies because *'it is cheaper to live a home for a while'*. She expects to take up temporary administrative or clerical work but hopes to move into scientific research in the future.

Wendy was 18 when she entered Exeter University to follow a combined honours course in History and Spanish. It was one of only two places that offered the course and, after a visit to the campus, Wendy decided upon Exeter *'it wasn't too far from the sea and you have both a small city and easy access to the countryside...but I wouldn't have wanted to have been any further into the South West, I might have felt a bit isolated'*. She is currently working in a temporary part-time job at a doctor's surgery near her parents home in Oxford in order to save money for a planned trip to South America. She doesn't have a clear idea about what she wants to do in the future but has been applying for graduate training type positions in large international organisations, which tend to be in London. *'I could be anywhere... I'm open about where I live, but I would like to spend more time living and working abroad...my friends and family are pretty scattered so I'm considering any location at the moment'*.

## 3.4 Who will stay or leave the South West?

The figures above indicate that expecting to stay in the region after studies was fairly common. Indeed, half (51 per cent) of all full-time leavers (from South West higher education institutions) expected to stay in the region initially, and this rose to 90 and 96 per cent amongst part-time and OU respondents. However, amongst full-time leavers this falls to approximately one-third (34 per cent) after three years.

### 3.4.1 Initial graduate gain ... long-term loss

Focusing on the group of full-time leavers, it could be seen that the region could expect a 14 per cent net gain of individuals in the few months after courses have finished, as there were 1,346 students originally from the region before their studies. After their studies, 1,559 planned to stay in the region. However, the gain is

potentially short lived as after three years only 1,011 intended to be in the region which represents a net fall (on the pre-study numbers) of 25 per cent. The expected net gains for part-time and OU respondents in the short term were three and 26 per cent respectively. In the longer term the numbers of part-time respondents expecting to stay in the region fell by seven per cent but the numbers of OU respondents were still up, representing a more modest increase (than initially after studies) of ten per cent. This indicates that whilst many people have an expectation to stay in the South West in the short term, they do not intend to stay in the longer run.

Interestingly, the interview discussions highlighted the anticipated geographical mobility of leavers. Many talked of taking temporary work or recovering from study in one location, mostly either near their parental home or near their study institution, but talked about looking for graduate level work in another location, most usually this was London. Looking still further into the future (forward three years) some leavers anticipated working abroad, and even further into the future some spoke of a desire to return to the South West to settle down or when they had some 'money behind them'. Few saw their future in only one location.

### **3.4.2 Who stays?**

Propensity to stay appeared to be strongly affected by whether individuals were originally from the region or not. Staying in the region after studies was more common amongst those who originally came from the region, indeed the South West could expect to initially retain three out of every four full-time local students (and 96 and 98 per cent of part-time and OU respondents). However, just three in ten (31 per cent) of full-time leavers from outside of the region could be expected to stay after their studies. Expecting to be in region in three years time was also more common amongst those originating from the South West, although after three years the region could only expect to retain approximately half of their original cohort of local full-time students. The corresponding proportion for full-time leavers originally from outside the region intending to be in the South West in three years time is only 21 per cent, or one in five.

What proportion of each group expect to stay or return to the South West in the medium term? There are some interesting differences between the four groups of graduate identified earlier, namely the SW Loyals, Incomers, Passers Through and Lost SW Graduates. Around two in every five (39 per cent) SW Loyals and three in five (59 per cent) of Incomers expect to have left the South West in three years time. Conversely, one in six (16 per cent) Lost SW Graduates and one in eight (12 per cent) Passers Through anticipated returning to the South West over the same time

period. These figures highlight the turbulence of new graduate careers and their mobility in the early years.

Differences in intentions to stay or leave were also noticed for gender, ethnicity and age, in that women (to a certain extent) and older leavers were more likely to stay in the region initially. However, this largely follows the region of domicile pattern as older female leavers are more likely to have lived in the region before their studies and therefore stay. These patterns held true when looking three years into the future.

There were also variations by subject and institution of study – which again can largely be explained by original domicile. Those most likely to stay in the region after studies were from Bath Spa University College, Dartington College of Arts, Gloucestershire University, and the College of St Mark and St John. Looking forward three years, those from Bath Spa and St Mark and St John were still more likely to be in the region than other leavers. Similarly, those most likely to stay in the South West had studied medicine, health or education subjects.

### **3.4.3 Why stay?**

In our survey of students in their final year at South West HEIs (*ie* our leavers survey) we asked an open (*ie* free text) question about respondents reasons for staying or leaving the South West. Those who had expressed an intention to stay were asked firstly to give the reasons why they intended to stay (which could be interpreted as positive factors for the region), and secondly to note any factors that might discourage them from staying (potentially negative factors against the region). Conversely, those who had expressed an intention to leave the South West were asked to list their main reasons for leaving the region (negative factors) and then to note any factors that would encourage them to stay (positive factors). A sample of open responses was used to create a set common set of factors for and against the region.

The most commonly mentioned reason for staying in the region amongst the full-time higher education leaving group, and part-time and OU respondents (who intended to stay) was that individuals had made their home/life in the region. Over half (55 per cent) of the full-time 'stayers' and three-quarters (74 per cent) of part-time and OU respondents gave this as a reason (see Table 3.10). Other commonly cited reasons for staying were:

- the quality of life and the environment
- job and career opportunities
- friends, and
- further study opportunities.

**Table 3.10: Reasons for staying in the region amongst those intending to stay**

Stay factors	Route:	FT leavers			PT respondents	OU respondents
		All (%)	SW Loyals (%)	Incomers (%)	All (%)	All (%)
Home/life in the region		55	70	34	74	74
Quality of life/environment		31	25	37	11	20
Job/career opportunities offered		21	17	31	44	32
Friends		13	12	16	2	6
Further study opportunities		11	7	15	0	0
Social life/interests		3	2	3	1	<1
Finances/money		2	3	2	1	1
Housing costs		2	2	2	1	<1
<i>Base*</i>		<i>1,351</i>	<i>755</i>	<i>391</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>341</i>

\* those intending to stay who answered the question

Note: Multiple responses allowed, so columns total to over 100 per cent

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

For South West Loyals, 'home' was by far the most commonly indicated reason for staying in the region (see Table 3.10). However, for Incomers quality of life, job opportunities and study opportunities were relatively more likely to have been noted. This suggests that for some, these factors overcome the draw to move back home.

These points are illustrated by comments made by the questionnaire respondents:

*'I love Cheltenham – the feel, the people, the pubs, shops – and there seems to be good job opportunities here.'* (SW Loyal, Female, Business)

*'Bristol is a good place to live and I have good friends here.'* (SW Loyal, Male, Biological/Physical Sciences)

*'I prefer it to the North and London is too hectic – the South West suits my personality.'* (SW Loyal, Male, Creative Arts)

*'I am from Cornwall, spent year out in London and that was enough!'* (SW Loyal, Male, Engineering/Technology)

*'I live in the South West and the environment is cleaner down here.'* (SW Loyal, Female, Biological/Physical Sciences)

*'The quality of life is better, it is cleaner and safer than other areas, it is also more spacious.'* (SW Loyal, Female, Humanities)

*'I have become very fond of the area since moving here to study.'* (Incomer, Male, Agriculture)

*'I know and like the area, many of my friends are also staying on here.'*  
(Incomer, Female, Biological/Physical Sciences)

The interviews with SW Loyals also indicated that many planned to stay in the South West to pursue their careers, which in some cases involved further study at their original institution. These individuals tended to be positive about the opportunities the region had to offer them, especially in terms of banking and finance, sales, IT and engineering.

*'There are plenty of job opportunities around Bristol, Swindon and Gloucester especially on the engineering front.'* (Male, SW Loyal Engineering/Technology)

Some of the Incomers interviewed indicated that they had come to the region to follow a particular course and location was not originally key to their decision making, however once in the South West they enjoyed their time and wanted to stay on beyond their studies. This group were also optimistic about job prospects in the South West.

*'There are plenty of jobs in my area [IT], including graduate level positions...many of the big insurance companies have moved out of London and into Bristol ... and there are other big companies like Rolls Royce and British Aerospace.'* (Male, Incomer, ICT)

*'The range of job opportunities is better than back home ... the area is good for sales companies and would be good for people who have done business or marketing degrees.'* (Female, Incomer, Scriptwriting)

*'There are quite a lot of big businesses building up in the area ... call centres have taken over in the Bristol area. There are good opportunities in Bristol and there is a good mix of industries in the rest of the region. The housing situation is horrendous with houses becoming prohibitively expensive ... some kind of salary weighting would be useful.'* (Female, Incomer, Religion)

### **What might make them leave?**

Many of those who indicated their intention to stay, also commented (as requested) on factors that would discourage them from doing so. Jobs, money and housing were the most frequently criticised aspects of the region, and some of the comments were quite severe. Illustrative comments include:

What factors would discourage you from staying?

*'... lack of well paid managerial level jobs and restricted transport and access to major cities.'* (SW Loyal, Female, Social Sciences)

*'... if I can't find a job or accommodation in my price range.'* (SW Loyal, Female, Business Studies)

*'... if I couldn't find suitable work, I would look elsewhere.'* (SW Loyal, Male, Business Studies)

*'... being priced out of the housing market. I may have to move home.'*  
(Incomer, Female, Humanities)

*'... Plymouth is the graveyard of all ambition.'* (SW Loyal, Female, Business Studies)

*'... I need to stay in the South West until the children have at least completed their GCSEs - the South West holds no attraction for me to stay ... The wages here don't pay enough to support a family of any size. The South West is considered the graveyard of opportunity, there is plenty here but no one wants to stay due to the poor wages.'* (SW Loyal, older Female, Humanities)

*'... The weather – it rains all the time. The facilities are poor, except in the big cities. Transport links are only just satisfactory (eg trains, buses).'* (SW Loyal, Male, Biological/Physical Sciences)

*'... Bristol is good for finance but good graduate opportunities are fairly scarce.'* (Female, SW Loyal, OU degree)

*'It is not as good as other areas. You could be doing a similar job in other areas for more money or be on a higher grade. There are fewer job opportunities at higher grades compared to elsewhere.'* (Female, SW Loyal, Nursing)

However, in interviews, several SW Loyals noted that longer term the region could not offer them the career and lifestyle opportunities they sought. These individuals tended to look towards London where better jobs and higher salaries were expected, and felt as if they would soon outgrow the South West.

*'I don't foresee staying in the South West in the future. I hope to be working for a big company earning loads of money but I don't think the range of big companies in the SW is extensive. There is not much opportunity in the South West for graduates with ambition.'* (Female, SW Loyal, Management and Languages)

### **3.4.4 Who leaves?**

As noted above, there were differences in intentions to stay or leave amongst the group of full-time leavers but this was largely influenced by region of domicile prior to higher education. Younger leavers and those from black and minority ethnic groups were relatively more likely to move out of the South West after their studies, as were those who had studied at the Royal Agricultural College, and Bath, Bristol and Exeter Universities; or had followed engineering and technology, and language courses. Interestingly, looking forward three years those who had studied business and administrative and creative arts subjects were now also more likely to have left the region.

#### **Where do leavers expect to go?**

Of those expecting to leave the South West immediately after their after studies, the most popular broad destination was London and

the South East. Overall three in ten (30 per cent) full-time leavers (*ie* people coming to the end of their final year of studies and about to leave their higher education institution) expected to move out of the region and into London and the South East after their studies. Looking at only those that intended to leave the South West, London and the South East draws three fifths (60 per cent). The importance of London as an employment destination, initially or later in individuals careers, was also highlighted in interviews with leavers. Interestingly some indicated that they would move to London even before securing work there, or planned to move there to take up temporary work.

*'London seems to be the place where everybody is, at least half of my peer group at university planned to go there when they graduated. London is a communal meeting place for graduates.'* (Male, Lost SW Graduate, Computer Assisted Engineering)

*'I have always wanted to live in London to see what it is like and see if I like it. There are probably better job opportunities and because of the social scene.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Applied Statistics)

*'Salaries on paper are not particularly competitive. I might be able to get a job for £15,000 or £18,000 down here but in London I could probably find something for £25,000 plus other perks.'* (Male, Incomer, Computer Aided Design)

*'The jobs that make you go wow are usually in London or in the North.'* (Female, SW Loyal, OU degree Mixed Modules)

*'I could do what I want in the South West but I think the opportunities and financial rewards will be greater in London.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Medicinal Biochemistry)

*'I couldn't achieve my goals in the South West, there is a shortage of industry. I want to go somewhere big and salaries are higher in London.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Languages)

Just over a quarter of those who intended to leave after their studies expected to move to somewhere else in the UK (*eg* outside of the South West, South East or London) and the most popular destinations were: the Midlands, Wales and the North West. Few individuals expected to move abroad after their studies, but amongst those that did, the most commonly noted locations were Europe, Asia and the Far East, and North America. Perhaps it should be noted these are general location expectations not necessarily where people expect to work, as we asked all respondents, regardless of expectation of being in work or not, to indicate their likely location in the few months after finishing their course and in three years time.

As noted above, the numbers and proportions expecting to be in the South West in three years time fell (from 51 to 34 per cent), and correspondingly the numbers and proportions expecting to be located elsewhere rose. The proportion expecting to be in London and the South East rose from 30 to 43 per cent, and whilst the figures for elsewhere in the UK remained stable, the numbers and proportions expecting to go abroad had increased from six to 11 per cent. Popular destinations for those expecting to be overseas in three years time were: Europe, North America, and Australia.

### 3.4.5 Why leave?

In the free text question, the most commonly mentioned reason for wanting to leave, amongst those who expressed the intention to do so, was the lack of job and career opportunities in the South West (see Table 3.11). Other frequently mentioned reasons for leaving were to return home and for financial reasons.

For Lost SW Graduates job and career opportunities were particularly important, and featured frequently in their comments. Money and finances were also relatively more likely to be mentioned by this group than by Passers Through. For Passers Through although job and career opportunities were also the most commonly mentioned reasons for intending to leave the region, 'home' (*ie* returning home) was particularly common.

*'There are hardly any graduate positions in the area [Plymouth], and poor wages.'* (Lost SW Graduate, Female, Education)

**Table 3.11: Reasons for leaving the region amongst those intending to leave**

Leave factors	Full-time students		
	All	Lost SW graduate (%)	Passer through (%)
Job/career opportunities offered	50	53	47
Home/life in the region	31	21	36
Finances/money	10	13	9
Further study opportunities	8	9	7
Home/work abroad	6	7	5
Housing costs	6	2	7
Change	5	7	5
Friends	4	4	5
<i>Base*</i>	<i>1,224</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>855</i>

\* those intending to leave who answered the question

*NB* Numbers for part-time and OU too small to be reported

Note: Multiple responses allowed, so columns total to over 100 per cent

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

*'I am leaving to be nearer to my family, and because it will allow a more economical standard of living. Also there is a bad attitude here, from a minority, towards people from the North.'* (Passer Through, Female, Education)

*'Places like Totnes, Plymouth and Cornwall are very difficult for jobs, apart from unskilled, seasonal work like chamber-maiding. There are few opportunities in any of the major industries or anything where you are likely to earn a decent wage.'* (Passer Through, Female, Music)

The survey identified that employability was relatively more important to Lost SW Graduates than other leavers, when it came to choosing a university or college. Their interviews indicated that they tended to have a poor opinion of the quality of opportunities for graduates in the region, and many looked to London to fulfil their requirements.

*'The South West is not great for opportunities, especially for someone of my age and qualification ... lots of graduates are impatient to enter a decent job at a decent level, rather than sit around and make tea, job opportunities in the South West would keep you down at this sort of level.'* (Lost SW Graduate, Female, Sport and Exercise Science)

*'There is a lot competition for jobs and it is expensive to live here.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, Food Science and Business)

*'I would quite happily look for work in Bristol but there don't seem to be many graduate employers ... there's things like the BBC, who I'd love to work for but its very competitive and they don't take people on long term contract ... the number of jobs available in the South West is definitely lower although the quality is the same.'* (Lost SW Graduate, Female, English)

The interviews indicated that after studying in the region, Passers Through tend to return to their home region, back to family and friends. Like Incomers, this group were attracted to the region initially by particular courses or the reputation of institutions but they also, upon a visit or during their studies, appreciated the environment in the South West. However, this group regard the South West as an expensive place to live and do not tend to see it offering them the quality of opportunities they seek. They therefore feel that they should or must move away even though they feel it is a nice place to live. However, some talked of the possibilities of returning to the region later in life.

*'I see it as a place I might want to go when I'm a bit older or when I want to have a family. I think it is relatively relaxed because it is rural and it is pretty but its not a place where there are a lot of high powered jobs.'* (Female, Languages, Passer Through)

*'I would love to return to the South West. It is a lovely place to live ... maybe to start a family.'* (Passer Through, Female, Humanities)

*'The quality of life is better in the South West but the quality of jobs is not.'* (Female, Passer Through, English)

*'I would love to move back to Bath at some point, but I don't know when ... it would be an idyllic place to live but it is very expensive.'*  
(Female, Education, Passer Through)

*'Very nice place to live but there just aren't the opportunities there - no scope for advancement ... I'm sure there are jobs in the South West but I'm looking for a job that provides training and prospects. In the South West it's just jobs rather than opportunities...jobs for money rather than jobs for advancement.'* (Passer Through, Male, Languages)

*'Bristol is a vibrant and diverse city. I would like to perhaps live there later on in life.'* (Passer Through, Female, Humanities)

### **What might make them stay?**

Comments on the questionnaire and in the interviews suggest that those who intended to leave might be persuaded to stay if there were job and career opportunities available, if better wages were available, and if house prices were lower. For this group, it would seem that the South West could not offer the opportunities they were seeking. However other potential leavers indicated that the quality of life offered by the South West might encourage them to stay. Indeed comments suggested that for some it was more a case of not really seeing a way to stay rather than not really wanting to stay.

What factors would encourage you to stay?

*'... if there were more blue chip companies. However, Bristol is a lovely city and an excellent area to live in.'* (Passer Through, Female, Business Studies)

*'... cheaper housing.'* (Passer Through, older Female, Health)

*'... better wages and more facilities for younger people.'* (Lost SW Graduate, Female, Education)

*'... my closeness to my family and general love of the South West.'*  
(Lost SW Graduate, Male, Humanities)

*'Bristol is a good city to live in, generally safe, lots to do and lots of parks and open spaces.'* (Passer Through, Female, Biological/Physical Sciences)

*'... the lower crime rate, if there were cheaper accommodation in the nicer parts of Bristol.'* (Passer Through, Female, Business)

### **3.4.6 What students think about South West?**

We asked our sample of leavers (students in their final year of studies from SW HEIs) what they thought about the South West region as a place to live and study and also as a potential place to work. They were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the region using a five point scale (where 1 = strong disagreement and five = strong

agreement). Calculating the mean score for each statement indicates the strength of feeling about certain aspects of the region, and the higher the mean score the more positive the feeling about the region. Table 3.12 indicates that full-time first degree leavers, and part-time and OU respondents, see the region in terms of its countryside and cultural heritage, and view it as a good relaxed place to study that is neither too quiet or too remote. However they do feel that students tend to leave the area after their studies, that living costs are high and that transport links are poor (particularly for part-time and OU respondents). Part-time and OU respondents also tended to give lower scores for the region as a place to study than full-time leavers.

Table 3.13 indicates that whilst the region is viewed positively (scoring above three) as a place to live and study, full-time first degree leavers, and part-time and OU respondents, tended to disagree with statements about the region's ability to provide graduate level employment opportunities. It was felt that there were few large employers in the region and that salaries were low. Part-time and OU respondents were particularly harsh about salaries in the region. The region was therefore regarded as a good place to study but not a good place to work.

There was some difference in scores noted amongst the full-time leavers (due to the smaller number involved, no sub-analysis was carried out for part-time and OU leavers). Female full-time leavers were marginally more likely to be positive about aspects of the South West than males, with the exception of living costs. Female

**Table 3.12: Feelings about the South West as a place to live by mode of study**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>FT Tendency</b>	<b>FT Mean</b>	<b>PT Mean</b>	<b>OU Mean</b>
Plenty of open space and varied countryside	Strongly Agree	4.13	4.35	4.34
Recommend the region as a good place to study	Strongly Agree	4.09	3.79	3.61
Has an interesting cultural heritage	Agree	3.64	3.73	3.75
It does not feel too far from anywhere *	Agree	3.56	3.53	3.61
It is not too quiet in the Winter months *	Agree	3.40	3.43	3.60
Pace of life is less hectic/stressed	Agree	3.39	3.51	3.63
Region offers exceptional arts and cultural activities	Agree	3.14	3.10	2.98
Local people are friendly to students	Agree	3.05	3.31	3.18
Region offers exceptional leisure facilities	Agree	3.03	3.28	3.19
People do stay in the region after their studies *	Disagree	2.87	2.84	2.87
Transport links are not poor *	Disagree	2.73	2.40	2.25
Living costs are not high *	Disagree	2.60	2.55	2.59

\* statements and scores have been reversed to allow direct comparison

*Nb:* Scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each statement

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

**Table 3.13: Feelings about working in the South West by mode of study**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>FT Tendency</b>	<b>FT Mean</b>	<b>PT Mean</b>	<b>OU Mean</b>
Recommend the region as a good place to gain graduate level employment	Disagree	2.93	3.03	2.83
There are large employers in the region *	Disagree	2.74	2.61	2.62
Salaries in the region are not low *	Disagree	2.62	2.29	2.38
There are many graduate job opportunities in the region	Disagree	2.54	2.62	2.69

\* statements and scores have been reversed to allow direct comparison

NB: Scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each statement

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

leavers were also marginally less harsh about the employment aspects of the region, however studies have indicated that women do tend to have lower expectations for the labour market.

Although the numbers were small, full-time leavers from black and minority ethnic groups or who considered themselves to be of mixed race were more likely to be positive about the region as a place to find graduate level employment than leavers from a white background, and were generally less critical about employment aspects of the region.

Older full-time leavers were more positive about the relaxed pace of life, the open spaces and friendliness of the region but were relatively less positive about living costs and salaries. In contrast, younger leavers were more positive about transport links and graduate opportunities, and were more likely to recommend the region as a place to study and to work.

Scores for the region were particularly varied when examined by location before study (see Table 3.14 and Table 3.15). Leavers (students in their final year of study) originally from outside of the region were less critical of the region's employment prospects and transport links. This may suggest that this group have a different, and perhaps less accurate, body of knowledge about the area than more local students and graduates. Those from the region who were most critical about graduate employment in the region were those from Cornwall and Devon, the peninsular of the region; whilst those least critical came from the SW borders – *ie* the area now called the West of England, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. Those from the borders were also more positive about location (in terms of closeness to other areas) and transport links but were the most critical about living costs.

**Table 3.14: Feelings about the South West as a place to live by location before study (full-time leavers only)**

Statement	Location prior to study			
	SW Peninsular	Mid SW	SW Borders	Outside SW
Plenty of open space and varied countryside	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.0
Recommend the region as a good place to study	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2
Has an interesting cultural heritage	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.6
It does not feel too far from anywhere *	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.5
It is not too quiet in the Winter months *	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.4
Pace of life is less hectic/stressed	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.4
Region offers exceptional arts and cultural activities	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.2
Local people are friendly to students	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.0
Region offers exceptional leisure facilities	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0
People do stay in the region after their studies *	2.6	2.8	3.1	2.9
Transport links are not poor *	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.9
Living costs are not high *	3.0	2.6	2.3	2.6

\* statements and scores have been reversed to allow direct comparison

*Nb:* Scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each statement

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

**Table 3.15: Feelings about working in the South West by location before study (full-time leavers only)**

Statement	Location prior to study			
	SW Peninsular	Mid SW	SW Borders	Outside SW
Recommend the region as a good place to gain graduate level employment	2.6	2.8	3.2	3.0
There are large employers in the region *	2.5	2.7	3.0	2.8
Salaries in the region are not low *	2.0	2.4	2.9	2.8
There are many graduate job opportunities in the region	2.1	2.4	2.8	2.6

\* statements and scores have been reversed to allow direct comparison

*Nb:* Scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each statement

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

Those intending to leave the region after their studies were generally more positive (than those intending to stay) about the region as a place to study and tended to be less critical about the costs of living, transport links and salaries in the South West.

However, this group were most critical about the quiet and remoteness of the South West and most likely to believe that people leave the region after their studies. On the other hand, those intending to stay were particularly positive about the pace of life, open spaces, friendly people, and leisure facilities that the region has to offer. Also those intending to stay but who were originally from outside of the region (Incomers), although most critical about living costs, were the least critical about graduate opportunities and lack of employers, and were most likely to recommend the region as a good place to gain graduate level employment.

Variations in scores were also noted for subject of study. Leavers who had followed a course in medicine were the most positive about the region as a place to work although were most negative about living costs in the area. However, leavers who had studied business or administrative subjects or had undertaken creative arts courses were the most negative about salaries in the region, and with education and maths, statistics and IT students, were the most negative about graduate level opportunities in the area.

The small number anticipating working in marine industries after their studies were the most critical about the employment aspects of the region. Similarly, those anticipating working in environmental technologies, creative industries, and retail were most critical about the graduate opportunities in the region. Those least critical about the regions employment prospects were those expecting to work in the biotechnology and the voluntary sectors. This group, and those anticipating working in the food and drink sector were more positive about recommending the region as a good place to gain graduate level employment.

### 3.5 Key points

- In the few months after finishing their studies, those who had studied full-time, and particularly younger students, tended to expect low paid temporary 'stop gap' work in sales and admin type jobs in the retail, leisure and tourism, food and drink, and financial and business services. However, three years after finishing their studies, the vast majority of leavers expect to be in permanent professional posts.
- The average (median) expected salary, amongst full-time leavers expecting to work immediately after graduation, was £12,500 reflecting the high tendency towards temporary work. The average anticipated salary for those expecting permanent work was £16,000 compared to the average of £11,000 for temporary work. Anticipated salaries amongst those who had studied part-time or with the Open University were higher still, reflecting their probable greater labour market experience and career continuity. Full-time leavers anticipated their average salary would increase to £22,000 in three years time.

This reflects the move towards permanent work rather than anticipated dramatic pay rises.

- The lowest initial salary expectations were among younger students, females, those expecting to stay in the region after their studies, and those expecting to work in retail sales and administrative positions. Older students, males, those expecting to leave the South West (especially those headed towards London and the South East), and those expecting to work as ICT and engineering professionals had the highest immediate salary expectations.
- After three years, younger students expected to have caught up their older peers in terms of salary expectations, with business, finance, legal, marketing, sales, PR and advertising added to the list of anticipated high paying occupations.
- There was little interest in self-employment initially (although the numbers grow after three years in the labour market), except for a few anticipating working as ICT and creative professionals. Self-employment was more popular amongst those with greater labour market experience *eg* older students and those who had studied part-time or with the OU.
- Older students, those who had studied part-time or with the Open University, and those full-time students who had followed vocational courses (*eg* medicine, health, education, IT) or had followed courses with built-in work experience were more likely to expect permanent work immediately after their studies.
- Commonly anticipated permanent posts after studies were in the health and social welfare; business, finance and legal; and teaching and academic professions. Commonly anticipated industries were the public and financial and business services sectors. Looking ahead three years these posts and industries were still popular but so too were creative, marketing, sales, PR and advertising occupations; and creative industries. Some 30 per cent of leavers initially expect to work in the SWRDA priority sectors – rising to 38 per cent after three years (although not all of these expect to work in the South West).
- Anticipated industry and occupation varied by gender and age and, critically, subject choice (which in turn is related to gender and age). Thus:
  - Women were more likely to expect to work as health and social welfare, and teaching and academic professionals and to work in the public sector. They were also more likely to have taken courses in subjects related to health, education and medicine.
  - Men were more likely to expect to work as business, finance and legal, ICT, and engineering professionals and to work in engineering and ICT industries. However, they

were also more likely to have taken courses in the fields of engineering and technology, maths, statistics and IT.

- Younger students were more likely to expect to work in business, finance, legal, marketing, sales, PR and advertising professions; and in the financial and business services sector. However, they were also more likely to have followed courses in languages, business and administrative studies.
- Older students were more likely to expect to work in health and social welfare, teaching and academic, creative and engineering professions; and in the public, engineering, and creative sectors and were relatively more likely to have studied health, humanities, engineering, technology, creative arts and education subjects.
- In the first few months after completing courses many students at South West HEIs (around half) intend to remain in the region. While this leads to a short term net increase in the number of individuals with high level skills, the gain is short-lived as after three years, most students (two-thirds) expect to leave and leading to a net fall. While many South West graduates have an expectation to stay in the South West in the short term, they do not intend to stay in the longer run.
- Propensity to stay in the region after studies, in the short and longer term, is strongly affected by home region. Staying in the region was much more common amongst those originally from the South West. It is also more common amongst female, and older students, and amongst those studying at institutions with a relatively local market – all linked to the tendency to have lived in the South West before their studies.
- The most common reasons given for staying in the region were that individuals had made their home/life in the South West (particularly common amongst those who already lived in the region – SW Loyals), and the quality of life/environment and the job and career opportunities that the region offers (particularly common amongst those who moved into the region to study – Incomers).
- Intending to leave the South West was more common amongst those who had lived outside of the region prior to their studies; and as such was relatively more common for younger students and those from black and minority ethnic groups. It was also more common for those who had studied at institutions with a higher national profile.
- The most popular broad destination, for those expecting to leave the South West, was London and the South East followed (at least in the short-term) by the Midlands and Wales. Few students expected to go overseas especially immediately after graduation.

- The most common reasons given for leaving the South West were the lack of job and career opportunities, and the (low) salaries offered (particularly amongst those who lived in the region before their studies – Lost SW Graduates); and also to return home (particularly amongst those originally from outside of the region – Passers Through).
- Generally students in their final year of higher education in the South West thought the region a good place to study, but not a good place to work. The natural environment was viewed positively, but transport links were felt to be poor and living costs high and there was felt to be relatively few graduate job opportunities.
- Leavers who had studied business or administrative subjects or had undertaken creative arts courses were the most negative about salaries in the region, and with education and maths, statistics and IT students, were the most negative about graduate level opportunities in the area.

# 4. Hard Times: Making the Transition

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In this chapter we focus on the transitions that students make to the labour market after they graduate. We begin by looking at the process that new graduates go through to get a job in the South West before examining where they actually work (Chapter 5). In this Chapter we draw on a wide range of evidence including the HESA survey of graduate destinations, our survey of students in the final year of their study at a South West higher education institution (leavers survey), our own small survey of graduates with a connection to the region (in that they either studied in the region or lived in the region before their studies), and our interviews with graduates, many of whom were employed in the South West.

In terms of our grid of graduate types, we can describe the experiences of almost all groups, with the exception of those deemed 'Missed Opportunities' who have no connection to the South West (see Table 4.1). It should be noted however, that the classification of graduate type in the leavers survey data is based on intention rather than real actions.

## 4.1 Finding work

We begin by looking at the process graduates went through to find a job in the South West. Indeed some began the process while

**Table 4.1: Typology of graduates' relationship to the South West**

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Types of 'graduate'	Where from?	Where studied?	Where job?
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

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Source: IES, 2002

in higher education by taking various measures which could improve their employability, although many may not have done so solely with that intention.

#### 4.1.1 What actions did South West Leavers undertake to improve their employability?

Respondents to our leavers survey of final year students in South West HEIs, were provided with a list of possible actions or options which are generally considered to improve employability. They were asked to indicate which they had undertaken whilst at their university or college. For full-time first degree leavers, the most common action which could potentially improve their eventual chances of getting a job was to work whilst studying *ie* during term time or vacations (84 per cent). This was closely followed by using the internet to look at potential careers and employers (83 per cent) (see Table 4.2). Visiting the higher education institutions' career office, applying to employers and attending employer presentations and careers fairs were also popular courses of action (59, 56 and 52 per cent respectively).

Interestingly, work placements (linked to the course) were reported by just under half of full-time leavers, and this group were much more likely to anticipate gaining permanent work after their studies than students with no such work or in-the-field experience (see Chapter 3). Respondents were also given the opportunity to record any other actions undertaken which they themselves believed to have enhanced their employability. These included looking for and applying for further study, undertaking

**Table 4.2: Actions taken to improve employability**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Full-time %</b>	<b>Part-time %</b>	<b>OU %</b>
Worked whilst studying full-time	84	21	NA
Used internet	83	35	38
Visited careers office	59	17	NA
Applied to employers	56	19	12
Attended presentations/fairs	52	21	13
Work placement	47	19	9
Institution careers advisor interview	36	13	23
Vocational course/module	18	20	30
Worked whilst studying part-time	13	82	85
External careers advisor interview*	NA	NA	9
Used OU careers website*	NA	NA	18
<i>Base</i>	<i>3,128</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>327</i>

\* factors applicable to OU respondents only

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

further training in specific skills, involvement in voluntary work and networking.

Interviews with leavers also indicated the range of activities individuals undertook whilst studying, and afterwards, to improve their employability. Many stressed the importance of 'getting involved' whilst at university and college and, in particular, joining societies, clubs and teams; and the importance of networking was also highlighted.

*'I'm trying to network because, although I hate that sort of thing, who you know can lead to a job.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, French and German)

*'Whilst at college I tried to prepare my career chances by choosing options with tutors who had good contacts ... I am quite successful at networking.'* (Female, Passer Through, Music)

*'Half of the jobs I applied to I found through the careers service who pointed me in the right direction, the other half I found out about through my father who works in the Civil Service.'* (Male, Passer Through, Languages)

Some of those interviewed also spoke of employability aspects built into courses such as opportunities to take more vocational options or to spend some of the study time abroad. For example the vocation skills course offered at Bath Spa University College which involves CV writing, interview techniques and a two week work placement; and a professional studies module on an Engineering course at the University of Bristol which gives a general grounding in marketing, accounts, business and law. These opportunities were not always taken up. However, those that did undertake a work placement tended to rate them highly:

*'My course involved a work placement in industry which is something employers always like.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, Aerospace Engineering)

*'If you've got a year in industry, I think you're in a much better position to get a job.'* (Male, Incomer, Computer Aided Design)

*'My course included a one year industrial placement but this doesn't really make much difference now as most courses offer a placement ... employers just ask for two years experience instead of one.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business Communications)

The importance of part-time work whilst studying was also mentioned by several of the interviewees, they reported that this helped to build work experience even if only working in a shop, bar or restaurant. Interviewees also felt that the experience of studying at a higher level had helped them to develop skills and qualities which employers would appreciate, and hence make them more employable. These included: independence, confidence, commitment, time management, meeting deadlines, team work, project work, and the ability to multi-task. They also

felt that getting a good degree classification and the reputation of their higher education institution would help them in getting a graduate level job. Some of those interviewed were also planning to undertake further study *eg* PGCE, masters, PhD, or professional qualifications – for some this represented a change in career direction but for others it represented a strengthening of career chances.

Returning to the survey of leavers, the vast majority of respondents who studied part-time or at a distance continued to work throughout their studies. For these groups, the Internet was a popular way to look at careers and to search for potential employers.

Amongst full-time first degree leavers, female leavers were more likely to undertake actions to improve their employability than their male peers. In particular they were more likely to take work placements, have interviews with careers staff and apply to employers. Younger leavers were more likely to attend employer presentations, work during term and vacations, and visit careers offices than their older peers. Those who were aged 30 or over when they started their studies were the least likely to use the internet, attend employer presentations or careers fairs or have careers interviews.

A key message here is that our leavers covered the full range of 'work experience' definitions, from formally arranged sandwich placements in industry, less formal experiences brokered by the careers services (*eg* a 'taster') or individual themselves, to work carried out during term time or vacations, primarily to bolster finances. Each was regarded positively by leavers, and they generally believed that their work experience had enhanced their employability. Those that did not have the opportunity of a placement felt they had missed out.

*'It would have been useful to have had work experience placements or at least some kind of module on work skills ... it [working] came as too much of a shock and I didn't feel very well prepared.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, Sport and Exercise Science)

#### **4.1.2 What have South West leavers done to find work?**

The interviews with leavers allowed us to investigate the actions that those who studied in the region had taken to look for work, and to gather feedback on their progress.

The interviews indicated that leavers used a variety of methods to look for work after graduating including: searching the internet, looking in newspapers and specialist papers/magazines (*eg* *New Scientist*, *Times Higher*), writing speculatively to companies, using local job centres, and using the university careers service. It would seem that these individuals found getting a temporary job

relatively easy but, as the following quotes highlight, some reported finding a graduate level job much harder, more difficult than they had expected, and perhaps particularly difficult in the South West.

*'The process of making applications is very time consuming ... the stupid competency questions, because I haven't climbed Mount Kilimanjaro! ... its very stressful, I don't think I look good on paper, the competency questions are biased towards people with experience.'* (Female, Lost SW Graduate, English)

*'At the start of my course the IT industry was booming, now there has been a sharp downturn ... I am having a lot of difficulty finding a job I may have to do something else altogether. The job market is treacherous, there is not only competition from recent graduates but also competition from experienced employees who have been made redundant due to the IT depression. I am not even being specific about the sorts of organisations I am applying to, anyone will do. My job searching is going badly ... I am rapidly losing hope.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business Communications)

*'I was hoping it was going to be easier to get a job and I expected starting salaries with a degree would be higher ... I am a bit disheartened ... I have done more looking than applying, I'm being a bit picky. I have studied for four years and accumulated big debts and am taking the attitude of not taking just anything.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business and IT)

*'The length of time it takes to fill in applications ... it was too much for me on top of studying in the final year and some of the questions on application forms are difficult to answer such as "what is the most important life event that has ever happened to you."'* (Male, SW Loyal, Languages)

*'The job search process is quite easy but actually landing a job can be quite difficult ... it is more difficult than it should be and it is difficult to find jobs in Bath, well paid graduate jobs are a bit thin on the ground ... it is hard for anyone who doesn't want to be an accountant or a bank clerk to find jobs in the area.'* (Male, Incomer, Chemistry)

Few talked of looking for jobs whilst studying, and several started the process only after finishing their studies:

*'The effort of the final year didn't leave me with sufficient energy and enthusiasm to tackle making applications.'* (Female, Incomer, Languages)

Interestingly, a small minority of those interviewed placed importance on purposely not using their university or college careers service to find work, instead relying on their own initiative.

*'I think it has been my own initiatives that have helped with my career.'* (Male, SW Loyal, Engineering/Technology)

*'There was a careers service which offered help with CVs, job vacancies etc. but I didn't use it. There hadn't been that much on offer and I*

*preferred, out of pride, to use my own resourcefulness and industry.'*  
(Female, Lost SW Graduate, Sport and Exercise Science)

#### **4.1.3 What did universities and colleges do to help South West leavers?**

The interview discussions with leavers from South West institutions provided an opportunity to examine the range of initiatives and services offered to students and graduates to help them with their careers, and to gauge leavers' reactions to these. The first aspect to note was that the discussions focused solely on university and college provision, there was no mention at all about help from other agencies. The services mentioned included: careers guidance, computer based skills assessment to identify suitable occupations, presentations from guest speakers (usually employers), careers fairs, summer placements, careers workshops, psychometric testing/aptitude testing, job publications, careers guide books, talks on and help with CV writing and interviews, emailing individuals about job opportunities, and 'job shops'. Many interviewees also noted that they could continue to access career services some time after graduating. Interestingly, it would seem that students want the careers help to come to them, they don't regard it as their role to be proactive and seek out help.

*'The support structures were there if you wanted them but you had to make the effort to access them ... I found the careers advisory centre very useful, through them I found out about recruitment agencies.'*  
(Male, Incomer, Chemistry)

Some interviewees described specific events hosted by their institutions that were aimed at helping future careers and decision making. For example:

- Dartington College of Arts hosts the 'Next Steps' week where Arts practitioners speak to students, to give advice about funding and bursaries
- the 'Business Challenge' at Bournemouth University, sponsored by a large financial services company, where teams compete in running their own business for a week, and
- 'Business Games' days at the University of Bristol where employers give a talk and then students engage in role playing exercises.

Many of those interviewed were very positive about the help provided by their institutions.

*'There was definitely support there if you wanted it, and it was easy to access.'* (Female, Incomer, Religion)

*'... mock job interviews were organised and taped in order to give feedback, CVs were looked over, and references written ... students received help making showreels and were introduced to useful contacts, and were given access to databases full of production companies,*

*industry people etc. ... Occasionally the university would take on freelance contacts with companies to give students firsthand industry experience ...* (Female, Passer Through, Film and Animation)

However, some indicated that their college or university could have done more to help them, and could have provided help earlier in their studies.

*'I wish the university had pushed us more in the second year to look for work when we graduated so that I would have had a job to go straight into.'* (Male, Passer Through, Business Communications)

Some felt too much emphasis was placed in the final year, or that help was biased toward those studying particular subjects. This group wanted help with career direction, and help in finding suitable (graduate level) employment. They tended to be less complementary about their university and college.

*'They didn't really do anything to help us ... they were quite laid-back and disorganised and we got quite used to the idea of doing everything under our own initiative ... there was a careers service but it didn't have a high profile, there were no outside speakers and no open days ... the lecturers had been teaching for some years and were out of touch with the industry.'* (Female, Passer Through, Broadcasting)

*'I think the careers service could be more helpful if it helped you to analyse which direction you want to go in rather than just responding to what you've asked about.'* (Female, Passer Through, English)

*'Lots of careers fairs but the employers were mostly bankers or from accountancy or law firms ... the university catered very well for economics and law students but not so for people like me, guest employers did not include anyone from the Environment Agency or from the conservation field.'* (Female, Passer Through, Biological Sciences)

*'Careers fairs cater for accountants, economists and law students. I went up to a man from [manufacturing company] and he didn't seem interested because I'd done languages. they should make them a bit broader.'* (Female, SW Loyal, Languages)

*'There wasn't much help at university in terms of preparing us on my course for future employment. We weren't given any help with making contacts or guidance about who we should write to and being a successful scriptwriter is all about building up contacts.'* (Female, Scriptwriter, Passer Through)

#### **4.1.4 For graduates, a degree alone is not felt to be enough**

Similar experiences were uncovered in our telephone interviews with graduates. During these discussions we sought qualitative information regarding their views and experiences of the final stages of their studies and the preparation for the transition to the labour market.

Almost all believed that gaining a degree would advantage them in the labour market but stressed the need for work experience also, which was also found in our discussions with leavers. In addition, almost all had undertaken some temporary, voluntary or part-time work during their time in higher education. In all these cases they had worked to help support themselves but in several cases also to improve their future job prospects. A handful had also undertaken some form of sandwich course or work placement which they felt invaluable not only to their studies but in terms of developing personal and work related skills.

An Engineering graduate, a 'SW Returner' commented that:

*'Academic qualifications only let you gain access to opportunities – it is not the same as getting you a job.'*

During the final year of study, employability became much higher on the undergraduate agenda – when the job search process typically began. A good number of those who began making job applications during final year often had a particular career path in mind or had a longer term career strategy. These were typically graduates from engineering, environmental sciences, creative arts or other vocational courses or were those with aspirations for 'policy type' graduate jobs or jobs on graduate schemes. The motivations among those with professional training degrees appeared to be more employment focused than others:

A 'SW Loyal' said:

*'I love teaching, working with young children and I knew from being a nursery nurse that developing into a teacher was what I wanted to do.'*

The uncertainty of knowing how to land a 'graduate job' was widespread. Many graduates felt unprepared and would have liked greater support and advice during and prior to becoming a student. Several had not made any use of the careers services as an undergraduate and the following comment reflects the views of a number of graduates:

A SW 'Returner,' with a degree in Economics and Economic Social History explained:

*'They had a careers guidance service (but) I didn't use anything. I didn't think about what I would do – I didn't want to think about it.'*

Use of careers services on campus had usually been confined to advice on how to construct a CV, develop interview techniques or presentation skills. Graduates told of the careers service being good at preparing students for the selection process and brokering for certain sorts of jobs. However, there was a real demand for receiving 'careers counselling' as many did not have a particular job or career in mind prior to graduating. However, this need had usually been identified with the benefit of hindsight:

An Economics and History 'Returner' said:

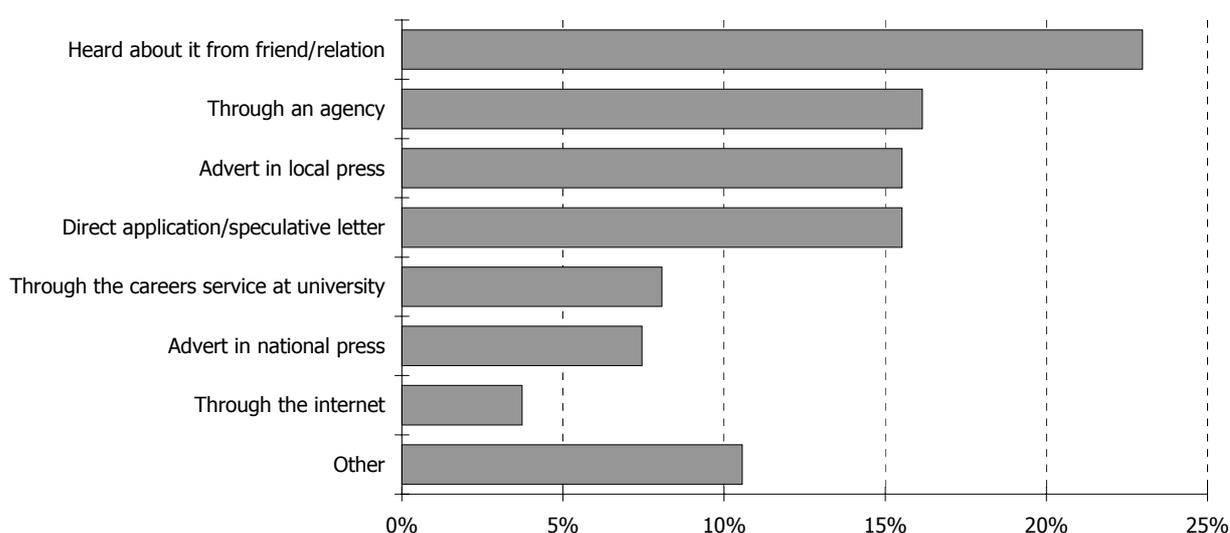
*'If they'd (university careers guidance) been part of the course – if it had been mandatory to do a course and they'd talked to us – it might have helped.'*

Taken together, this suggests that graduates are aware that a degree alone is not sufficient to guarantee access to a high flying career. With hindsight, they appreciate the value of extensive careers advice and counselling, but had not necessarily sought it. Their labour market awareness includes a acknowledgement of the importance of work experience in marketing themselves to employers. Perhaps we should ask the question 'are employers equally aware of the qualities that new graduates could bring to their organisations?' Have we a better informed supply than demand?

#### 4.1.5 How did graduates find their job?

Turning now to data from our survey of graduates many of whom graduated one year ago, the majority had found their way into employment. To better understand the routes through which new graduates find work early in their careers, we asked them how they had found their current job (see Figure 4.1). Most commonly, graduates had heard about their current job from a friend or relation. In conjunction with the findings from the leavers survey and interviews, this adds further weight to the importance of networking as a prime way of getting a job. Work experience is a key way of extending personal networks, however we found little evidence that graduates had made this link, a point which could be stressed within HEIs when promoting work experience. Given the recognition of benefits of networking, there may also be a role here for regional agencies to facilitate the development of professional networking.

**Figure 4.1: How graduates found their current job**



Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

Other popular routes into employment were recruitment agencies, local press and direct approaches by the graduate. Despite the important role played by HEI careers services in efforts to improve employability (see section 4.1.1), relatively few graduates said that they had found their current job through the university careers service.

Different routes into employment are used more heavily by certain groups, and offer different outcomes. Male graduates, and the more mature are more likely to have found their current job through advertisements in the local press. Direct applications are a more common route for female and older graduates. Men are more likely to say they found their current job through friends. Those who found work through the university careers service are more likely to have permanent contracts and professional work. Agencies on the other hand, are more likely to lead to temporary, non-professional work. Agencies are used more heavily by Incomers and Returners, perhaps as they mediate for graduates in an unfamiliar local labour market. The kind of work found through friends and relations is also more likely to be temporary and non-professional. Those not originally from the South West, especially Passers Through are more likely to have used less formal routes into employment, *ie* by making direct/speculative applications and their networks of friends and relations.

In our interviews with graduates a mixed model of job searching behaviours emerged. Some had planned to delay their job hunting until after graduation for a variety of reasons, the two main reasons being: either that they felt they were either too busy with finals and course work submissions or that they were waiting until after their degree outcomes were known. Others had begun making numerous applications both nationally and locally during their final year. The Internet played a key role, not only in terms of making on-line applications but also as a tool to widen the scope of searches and to find out more about companies and the employment proposition on offer. Other job search strategies included traditional methods such as local and national press, milkround, Prospects, careers services and using professional journals.

A SW 'Lost Graduate' in Business Economics said:

*'I downloaded a list of top consultancies and researched them, I sent my CV to XX over the Internet.'*

Another SW 'Lost SW graduate' from Civil Engineering said:

*'I had three or four weeks off after my last exam and then began looking on the Internet.'*

#### 4.1.6 How easy is it for graduates to get a job in the South West?

One measure of how easy it may be to get a job is the number of applications made compared to job offers received. Between them, the respondents to our graduates survey applied for over 1,700 jobs, an average (median) of two per person. Thirty eight per cent (660) of these applications were for jobs in the South West. Our respondents received 270 job offers, of which 53 per cent (145) were for jobs in the South West.

These data are more meaningful when broken down by current activity. Table 4.3 shows that those currently in temporary employment have made more effort, in terms of the number of job applications per person, to find work than those with permanent contracts, but in terms of the ratio of job offers to applications, have been less successful. Those in further study and taking time out have made relatively few applications for work. However, the average number of applications made by the others/unemployed is much higher, at 12 per person.

Looking at graduates from South West institutions in employment, those who obtain permanent employment have a higher success rate than those from other institutions. They make

**Table 4.3: Applications made and job offers, by current activity**

		Applications made		Job offers received		Ratio of job offers to applications
		Median	Sum	Median	Sum	
Permanent employment	SW HEIs	1.0	372	1.0	224	0.60
	Other institutions	2.0	222	0.0	62	0.28
	Total	1.0	594	0.0	286	0.48
Temporary employment	SW HEIs	3.0	411	0.5	86	0.21
	Other institutions	3.0	190	0.5	60	0.32
	Total	3.0	601	0.5	146	0.24
Further study	SW HEIs	1.0	38	1.0	28	0.74
	Other institutions	0.0	31	0.0	4	0.13
	Total	1.0	69	0.0	32	0.46
Taking time out	SW HEIs	2.0	86	0.0	36	0.42
	Other institutions	1.5	104	0.0	46	0.44
	Total	2.0	190	0.0	82	0.43
Other, including unemployed	SW HEIs	12.5	92	6.0	57	0.62
	Other institutions	10.5	176	1.0	42	0.24
	Total	12.0	268	2.0	99	0.37

Source: IES Graduate Survey, 2002

**Table 4.4: Applications made and job offers for South West positions, by current activity**

		Applications made		Job offers received		Ratio of job offers to applications
		Median	Sum	Median	Sum	
Permanent employment	SW HEIs	1.0	224	1.0	39	0.17
	Other institutions	0.0	62	0.0	21	0.34
	Total	0.0	286	0.0	60	0.21
Temporary employment	SW HEIs	0.5	86	0.0	11	0.13
	Other institutions	0.5	60	0.0	18	0.30
	Total	0.5	146	0.0	29	0.20

Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

fewer applications per head, but receive more job offers. On the other hand, those in temporary employment appear to be less successful in that they make the same number of applications, but receive fewer job offers.

A slightly different pattern emerges when we look at applications and job offers for positions in the South West (Table 4.4). Here, graduates from South West higher education institutions in permanent positions make more applications, but have a lower 'hit rate' (the ratio between applications and offers) than do those from other institutions. Those graduates from SW HEIs with temporary contracts also have a lower hit rate, but make the same number of applications per person.

The different types of graduates in our grid display differences in their job applications and offers. Taking all applications and offers (regardless of region) of those in employment, on average there are 173 offers from 1,085 applications, an offer/application rate of 0.16, or roughly one offer for every six applications. Returners have the highest success rate at 0.36 offers per application. They also make the highest median number of applications (three per person). Lost SW Students make the fewest applications, at around one per person, and receive 0.26 job offers per application. Passers Through have a much lower success rate, just 0.06 offers per application, and make approximately two applications each.

In terms of applications for positions based in the South West, Returners and SW Loyals make two each on average, but Returners receive a greater number of offers per person (0.41 per application, compared to 0.28 for SW Loyals). Incomers make very few applications per person on average, and have a much lower application/offer ratio, at 0.15. SW Loyals and Returners appear to be more determined to find work in the South West, whereas chance may play a greater role in Incomers' decisions to work in the region.

These differences in behaviours are likely to be due to a number of factors, some of which pull in opposite directions. For example, in general male graduates make a greater number of applications than do females. A higher proportion of Returners in our graduates survey are male, thus explaining some of the differences in the number of applications made in comparison with Lost SW Students. However, graduates who express a preference for working in the South West generally make fewer applications than those wishing to work outside of the region, but a very much smaller proportion of Lost SW Students wish to work in the South West, though that is the preference of the majority of Returners. Unfortunately, detailed information about the impact of personal characteristics and personal preferences on applications behaviour cannot be gleaned from a sample of this size.

There is mixed evidence about whether the South West loses graduates who would like to stay in the region, when they fail to find work here. For example the 28 Lost SW Students who found work, between them, only made six applications for jobs in the region. In contrast, the 23 Passers Through made 94 applications for jobs in the region, but only received nine offers.

### **Graduates' reflections on making the transition**

In our interviews with graduates we found many had returned to their family home following graduation both for economic and social reasons. This mirrors the patterns found for leavers. At this stage graduate interviewees had often been only able to find local employment in temporary or non-graduate work. Such work helped to pay off part of their student debt and also gave them more time to consider their future careers.

*'I wanted to find some work somewhere – not necessarily a good job, but something to tide me over because I was undecided about my career ... I really hadn't got a clue what I wanted to do.'* (Female, SW Returner, Economics)

*'I worked in a number of warehouses and did some data entry jobs, but only to earn some money – it wasn't really with any future career in mind.'* (Male, SW Returner, History)

Their work during this phase was often very similar to the sorts of jobs they had held during vacations – which were often unskilled and low paid. It was during this transitional phase that a number joined business partnership schemes. A few also had aspirations to travel before settling into a 'graduate job' whilst some had begun to consider further study or voluntary work as an alternative or a route to finding a graduate job.

An English graduate, 'Returner' said:

*'I have taken on two jobs that are close to the field I want to work in, but neither worked out very well they didn't really want someone with a degree. The employment situation here is really appalling and that's why I've decided to do a Masters degree.'*

An Environmental Studies graduate, also a 'Returner' said:

*'I found it so hard to establish myself after graduation. I was determined to work in the SW and use my subject so I did a few voluntary jobs all related to environmental/green issues and had short term research contract with local green initiative.'*

Another 'Returner', who had studied English commented:

*'I am doing the MA for personal interest and to improve my employability – it's less about personal interests these days to be honest.'*

Repeatedly graduates spoke of feeling disadvantaged by not having work related skills or the sorts of experiences employers wanted. This was perceived as being a real barrier to finding a graduate job and at this point many began to review their immediate career expectations. Repeatedly the value of gaining work experience as an undergraduate was stressed although again with hindsight. One graduate told us:

*'I realise now that the most important thing I did while I was at college was getting some temporary work in different environments, these have been much more important to me getting work than my degree. When I started my second job I assumed that my degree had been helpful as it was partially relevant to the job but I was told that, no, it was my job in telesales that had given me the edge over others and it has proved useful in doing the job too.'*

Graduates from engineering or vocational courses had tended to find the transition somewhat easier than others as they often had a career in mind prior to graduation. All of those we spoke with who had been part of a business partnership scheme or programme felt it invaluable and instrumental in helping them gain entry into the labour market. The schemes had provided a framework with opportunities to develop work related knowledge and skills via project based work placements. It was also common for some to continue in paid employment with their sponsoring employers for a short time after their placement finished:

A 'SW Loyal', a Contemporary History graduate said:

*'The x scheme was excellent and you got £125 a week. I learnt so much it was very well organised and a good way to get experience and in the long run maybe a job.'*

A 'Returner' Mechanical Engineer said of their scheme:

*'I spent 20 weeks on the scheme on an engineering project and was then asked to stay on but then the export market crashed and I was out. I went straight into another job because the market is better for engineers than other graduates down here.'*

## 4.2 What are South West graduates looking for?

We can get an idea of what students and graduates look for in an employer from our both our leavers and graduates survey.

### 4.2.1 What do South West leavers want?

Respondents to the leavers survey were asked to rate the importance of a series of factors when choosing an employer using a scale of one (not important at all) to four (very important). The most important factor for full-time first degree leavers was interesting and challenging work followed by opportunities for training and development (see Table 4.5). These were both considered to be very important by 72 and 59 per cent of full-time leavers respectively. These two factors were also the most highly rated amongst part-time and OU respondents. However, for these groups geographical location was also an important consideration, more so than for full-time leavers. Size of company tended to be regarded as only of some importance by full-time leavers, and by part-time and OU respondents.

Amongst the group of full-time leavers, female leavers place greater importance on geographical location than male leavers. Those from black and minority ethnic groups tended to rate financial package, reputation and training and development opportunities more highly than white leavers. Indeed for those from black and minority ethnic groups, training and development opportunities were considered the most important factor. Location was relatively more important and financial package less important for older leavers (those 30 or older when starting their studies) than their younger counterparts.

**Table 4.5: Importance of factors when choosing an employer by mode of study**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>FT Tendency</b>	<b>FT Mean</b>	<b>PT Mean</b>	<b>OU Mean</b>
Interesting/challenging work	Very important	3.7	3.7	3.7
Training/development opportunities	Very important	3.5	3.4	3.2
Financial package	Quite important	3.2	3.0	3.1
Geographical location	Quite important	3.1	3.3	3.2
Reputation within the industry	Quite important	3.1	3.0	2.9
Size of company	Of some importance	2.0	2.0	2.0

*NB:* Scores ranged from 1 not important at all to 4 very important, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each factor

*Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002*

Looking at the relative importance of factors by subject of study, the importance scores of financial package and location varied the most significantly. Financial package was relatively more important to business students and less important to education students, and location was relatively more important to health students but least important to engineering students. These patterns are probably influenced by the age and gender bias within these subjects *eg* health and education students are more likely to be older and female, whereas engineering students are more likely to be younger and male, and business students more likely to be younger.

Scores also varied by industry in which the leavers expected to be working after their studies. Financial package was relatively more important to those anticipating working in engineering, the food and drink sector, manufacturing and finance and business services; it was relatively less important for those expecting to work in the voluntary or public sectors or in creative industries. Training and development opportunities were relatively less important for those expecting to work in the voluntary sector as was the reputation of the employer. Reputation was also relatively less important to those anticipating working in the ICT sector, however it was considered important by those wanting to work in creative industries. Those expecting to work in this sector also placed relatively greater importance on interesting and challenging work as did those headed for the voluntary sector. Location of the employer was relatively more important to those looking for work in the public sector.

#### **4.2.2 What do graduates want from an employer?**

The questions about the importance of various factors in choice of employer were consistent in the leavers survey and the graduates survey offering the opportunity to compare the opinions of those, most of whom are believed to have graduated one year ago, with those just graduating.

Despite more direct experience of the graduate labour market, there is little change in graduates' priorities when choosing an employer – when ranked in order of importance, as in Table 4.6, the order of the factors remains unchanged. The mean scores of full-time graduates from South West institutions are also very similar to the leavers. The most notable difference is that one year on, new graduates give even less importance to size of company than they did on graduation. With the exception of size of company, there is little difference between graduates from South West HEIs and those from other institutions. Overall, 38 per cent of graduates thought that company size was not at all important.

**Table 4.6: Importance of factors when choosing an employer**

	<b>Overall tendency</b>	<b>SW institutions</b>	<b>Other institutions</b>
Interesting/challenging work	Very important	3.69	3.77
Training and development opportunities	Very important	3.48	3.52
Financial package	Quite important	3.05	3.04
Geographical location	Quite important	2.94	2.98
Reputation within the industry	Quite important	2.88	2.89
Size of company	Of some importance	1.74	1.95

NB: Scores ranged from 1, not important at all. to 4, very important. The base has not been reported as it varies for each factor

Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

Finding interesting and challenging work is the priority for all recent graduates – 78 per cent rated it as very important – regardless of gender, age group, location of institution, graduate type, current economic activity and subject with one exception. Graduates from business and administration courses place slightly more value on training and development opportunities than they do on the interest and challenge in their work.

In summary:

- graduates from biology and physical sciences, business and administration, and leisure and related subjects put more emphasis on training and development opportunities than do those from other subjects, especially those from mathematics/statistics/IT courses
- younger graduates place more emphasis on the financial package, than do their more mature peers
- graduates from mathematics/statistics/IT and business and administrative courses also seek to maximise the financial returns, in comparison to humanities and education graduates, for whom the financial package is much less important
- Incomers place more importance on the financial package, than do other types of graduate
- older graduates place a higher priority on geographical location, as do education graduates. In contrast, younger graduates and those from mathematics statistics IT courses put less emphasis on location. However, age and subject are likely to be interlinked,
- interestingly, all of the different graduate types think that the geographical location of a potential employer is ‘quite important’, and there is little difference between mean scores for this statement

- graduates who are not working (the other/unemployed group) and those in temporary work rate geographical location higher than other groups
- women are more interested in the employing organisation's reputation than are men. The same is true for younger graduates. In contrast, education graduates, SW Loyals and Passers Through rate this aspect of employment as less important than their peers
- younger graduates attach more importance to organisation size when choosing an employer, as do business and administration graduates and Lost SW Graduates.

### 4.2.3 Does size matter to South West leavers?

Turning once again to the leavers survey, size of company was considered to be the least important factor (of those given) when choosing an employer, and this was found for all groups of leavers. However, we also asked leavers to indicate what size of company they would prefer to work in when they finished their studies. Many formal work experience or placement opportunities which form part of individuals' courses are with small or medium sized companies. It is therefore interesting to see that almost twice as many full-time first degree leavers preferred to work in a small company (with less than 50 employees) than a large company (over 500 employees), 44 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. However, the reverse was true for part-time and OU respondents who generally preferred larger companies (see Table 4.7). This may well reflect their greater experience in the labour market and therefore suggest that new graduates may prefer to enter the labour market via smaller organisations and via temporary work. Indeed those expecting temporary work after their studies were more likely to prefer to work in a smaller company. Looking at the future preference of leavers adds further weight to this suggestion. In three years time full-time leavers, who in the main expect to be in permanent work, are more likely to prefer working in larger organisations, though the majority prefer to work in organisations with between 50 and 500 employees. There appears to be a preference for 'medium sized' in the 'medium term'.

**Table 4.7: Preferred size of company after finishing studies by mode of study**

<b>Preferred size of company</b>	<b>FT %</b>	<b>PT %</b>	<b>OU %</b>	<b>FT % (3yrs)</b>
Small (less than 50 employees)	44	19	24	24
Medium (50 to 500 employees)	33	16	30	43
Large (over 500 employees)	23	65	46	34
<i>Base</i>	<i>1,946</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>2,512</i>

Note: Only those expecting to be in work

Source: IES Leavers Survey, 2002

Among the group of full-time first degree leavers, older leavers were more likely to prefer a large organisation after completing their studies than younger leavers, as were leavers from medicine and health courses. Creative arts students, those from agricultural and veterinary courses and education students were more likely to prefer small organisations, as were those originally from the inner reaches of the region (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and Somerset). Those anticipating working in engineering, biotechnology and ICT industries (and the small numbers expecting to work in the marine industry) preferred to work in large organisations. However, those expecting to gain work after their studies in the voluntary sector, in the food and drink industry, in retail, in leisure and tourism or in the creative industries preferred to work in small organisations.

A key message for policy makers in the region, from both the graduate survey and leavers survey, is the positive attitude towards small and medium sized companies coupled with the desire for training and development. There may be scope to raise the profile of the opportunities for development in smaller organisations, to both graduates and the employers themselves. Small organisations can offer graduates something even if it is not accredited training. For example, the micro environment in smaller organisations often provides freedom for flexible, informal skill development. In contrast, graduates in larger organisations may have to compete for opportunities.

#### **4.2.4 Where do graduates want to work?**

In this section we look at the preferred location of employment among our sample of South West graduates who were either from or studied in the South West.

At the time of our graduate survey, 58 per cent of those in employment were located in the region. Looking at these South West based graduates in more detail:

- nine out of ten said that their preference was to work in the region. Of the remainder (n = 10), London and the South East was the preference of most
- eight out of ten graduates currently working in the South West believe they will still be in the region in two years time
- however, in two years time the South West is the **preferred** destination of only six out of ten. The rest are fairly evenly split between wanting to work in London or the South East or outside of the UK.

Of the 40 per cent who are currently based outside of the South West, around half can be found in London and the South East, and most of the others are elsewhere in the UK. Ninety per cent

do not expect to return to the South West in the next two years, and only twenty per cent would prefer to return to the region.

In addition:

- 86 per cent of SW Loyals expect to stay in the region, whereas only 11 per cent of Lost SW Students expect to return
- 81 per cent of Returners expect to stay, but only 61 per cent of Incomers think they will be in the South West in July 2004
- on the whole, the Passers Through do not expect to return.

Furthermore:

- all SW Loyals expressed a preference for being in the South West at the time of the survey, as did 84 per cent of Returners and 74 per cent of Incomers
- London and the South East was the most common preference for Lost SW Students and Passers Through, with the rest of the UK coming a close second
- SW Loyals and Returners maintain their commitment to the region – over sixty per cent would prefer to still be in the South West in two years time.

### **4.3 What graduate jobs are available in the South West?**

Having looked at what graduates want from the labour market we now turn to examine what opportunities are available to them.

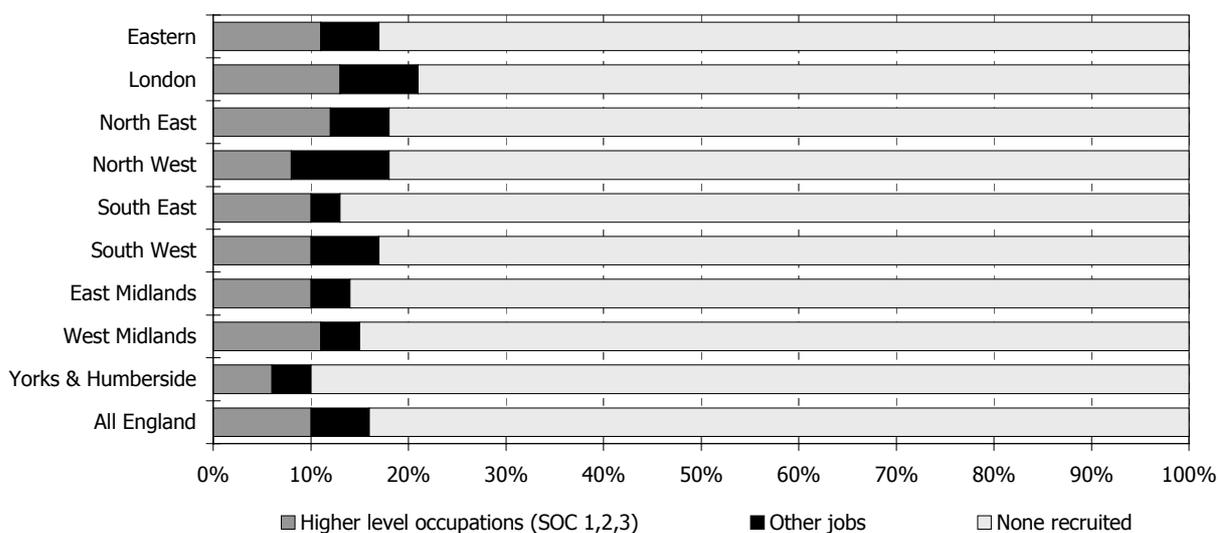
The Employers Skill Survey for 2002 found that around 15 per cent of establishments in the South West had vacancies. Of the 79,000 vacancies counted almost a quarter (18,000) were for managerial, professional or associate professional jobs, the type of work to which most new graduates aspire. Some of the region's organisations reported difficulties filling posts, and a large proportion of the hard to fill and skills shortage vacancies were found among the smallest establishments. The survey therefore suggests that there are vacancies in the South West which graduates could fill. However, there is little information on the number of vacancies specifically for new graduates, and less still which allows a regional breakdown. Several surveys, for example, the salaries and vacancies surveys of the Association of Graduate Recruiters are restricted to traditional graduate entry positions, and offer no regional breakdowns. CSU (the Higher Education Careers Service Unit) do however collect data on graduate vacancies and present it by region. Their data, drawn from the advertisements in the CSU's 'Prospects' publication, are skewed towards larger employers, and by definition are limited to those employers setting out to attract new graduates through this traditional recruitment route. Non-traditional, smaller and local recruiters are unlikely to use the Prospects directory.

The CSU data show that in the year to September 2001, Prospects carried advertisements for over 9,000 graduate vacancies. Over one fifth of advertised positions were general UK, which may include some South West postings. London and the South East offer a large number of graduate job opportunities, perhaps reflecting the regional distribution of 'blue chip' employers. Five per cent of vacancies were for positions based in the South West, although the region produces eight per cent of the UK's graduates (Table 4.8). However, most regions outside of the London and its peripheral regions are in the same position.

The Employers Skill Survey for 2002 shows that demand for new graduates, as measured by recruitment activity among a region's employer base, is similar in the South West to most other regions outside of London. As Figure 4.2 shows, 17 per cent of the estimated 226,000 establishments in the South West recruited a new graduate in 2001, the majority placing new graduates in higher level occupations. It appears likely therefore that the real issue may be the visibility of career options in the South West, particularly for those new graduates interested in graduate management entry positions.

The CSU data also give a breakdown of the kinds of work on offer in each region. Of the South West's vacancies, three-fifths are for 'engineering and technology services', 'finance' and 'information technology' jobs. Whilst the occupational groups listed obviously reflect the industrial interests of the types of organisation advertising in the directory, it is interesting to note that only the North West has a higher proportion of its vacancies listed as 'engineering and technology services'. Finance positions form a greater part of the vacancies in several regions, notably Yorkshire

**Figure 4.2: Which regions are recruiting new graduates? The proportion of establishments which have recruited new graduates or individuals with NVQ Level 4 or equivalent in the last 12 months**



Source: IES/Employer Skills Survey, 2001

**Table 4.8: New graduate vacancies by region**

<b>Location</b>	<b>No of jobs advertised 27 September 2000 and 26 September 2001</b>	<b>% of total vacancies</b>	<b>% of total first degrees granted 1999/2000</b>
North	153	2	5
Yorkshire & Humberside	317	3	11
East Midlands	238	3	8
North West	621	7	12
West Midlands	499	5	8
Eastern Region	584	6	5
South East	1,415	15	11
Greater London	1,606	17	12
<b>South West</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>
England (General)	127	1	—
Wales	135	1	6
Scotland	356	4	10
Other UK	133	1	3*
UK (General)	2,060	22	—
Overseas	629	7	—
<i>Total</i>	<i>9,326</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

\*Northern Ireland

Source: IES/CSU 2002

and Humberside, Wales and Scotland. No other region has a greater proportion of its vacancies in information technology. Although tourism is a priority economic sector, no vacancies were advertised for hotels, catering and accommodation in the South West.

#### **4.3.1 What salaries are on offer to new graduates in the South West?**

CSU also collect data on the salaries on offer, again from advertisements placed in 'Prospects', and they estimate that around one third of advertisers include salary information. Based on this limited number of employers, salaries on offer for vacancies in the South West appear to be a little behind those of many other regions, but roughly in line with the figure for all vacancies (Table 4.9). All but three named regions are within £500 of the South West's figure.

CSU paint an interesting picture of the real value of new graduate earnings when they compare regional salaries with average house prices across England and Wales (CSU, 2002). The South West ranked seventh out of the ten regions of England and Wales

**Table 4.9: Average salaries offered to new graduates in year to September 2001, by region**

<b>Location</b>	<b>£ a year</b>	<b>N</b>
Scotland	19,461	76
London	18,456	655
North	18,447	36
Overseas	18,438	151
South East	18,321	451
Eastern Region	18,158	164
East Midlands	18,150	83
Wales	18,060	53
<b>South West</b>	<b>17,933</b>	<b>203</b>
North West	17,782	285
UK (General)	17,614	547
West Midlands	17,273	184
Yorkshire & Humberside	17,218	94
Other UK	16,696	7
England (General)	16,174	61
<i>All vacancies</i>	<i>18,021</i>	<i>3,049</i>

Source: IES/CSU 2002

purely on the basis of advertised salaries. However, once housing costs were taken into account, the region dropped to ninth place, just behind the South East but safely above London in terms of 'real' earnings. The cost of living and housing issues were raised by students and graduates in both surveys and interviews. It is interesting that many of those who studied in South West HEIs believe that higher salaries are on offer in London, and bemoan the high cost of housing in the South West. The figures here show that, in reality, London does not offer the real financial rewards anticipated, and perhaps this gap in students' awareness could be addressed to the benefit of the region.

## 4.4 Key points

- Students undertake a range of actions whilst studying which, although not necessarily intentionally, may improve their employability. The most common actions involve work experience *ie* working part time whilst studying full time. Indeed, work experience was regarded as particularly valuable by graduates in the labour market who felt that a degree alone was not enough to secure graduate level employment. Having work related skills and work experience of the kind valued by employers was strongly emphasised by graduate interviewees.

- Graduates indicated that employability becomes more important to individuals towards the end of their studies, when they turn their attentions to job search.
- Interviews with graduates indicate that returning home after graduation is very common. Many find themselves in temporary 'stop gap' work, similar to their term time work experience. This gives them the time to consider their options and helps to reduce their student debt.
- However data from the graduate survey shows that those in temporary work may be in danger of becoming trapped in unsuitable temporary jobs and that this group may need greater support. For example, whilst on average graduates applied for two jobs each, those in temporary work were trying harder to gain work (making more applications) than those in permanent work, and were having less success. This was a particular problem for those from South West institutions.
- The South West was a popular employment destination for graduates. The survey showed that many applications were made to jobs in the South West, and indeed of the job offers received, a greater proportion of these were also in the South West.
- Over half of the working graduates surveyed were employed in the South West and for the vast majority of these, this was also their preferred place to work and they expected to still be in the region in two years time (*ie* three years after completing their studies). However, London and the South East were also popular destinations for the graduates surveyed.
- Graduates who had studied at South West HEIs were successful at getting permanent work but were relatively less successful in gaining permanent work actually in the region. This prompts the question: are South West graduates perhaps less attractive to South West employers? The most successful group at getting work in the region were those originally from the South West but had studied elsewhere, returning to the region to work (Returners). This group averaged at one job offer to every three applications. Returners and SW Loyals seemed to be more determined to find work in the South West than any other groups.
- Students coming to the end of their studies and turning their attentions to the labour market, looked for employers that would offer interesting and challenging work and training and development opportunities. So too did graduates with more direct experience of the labour market. Location of employment was important to some students, especially those that had studied part time or with the Open University, and both older and female students.
- Size of employer was considered to be relatively unimportant by students, and even less important by graduates. However,

when asked for a preference, students, particularly those in temporary work, reported that they would prefer to work in a smaller company than a larger one. However, looking ahead in three years time, students were more likely to prefer medium to large organisations. This may indicate that new graduates prefer to enter the labour market via small organisations. Indeed those with greater labour market experience were more likely to prefer to work in a larger organisation.

- National data collected by the CSU, which although skewed towards traditional graduate entry positions and larger employers, gives us an indication of the graduate opportunities available in the South West. It shows that the South West is in a relatively similar position to other regions of the UK, with the exception of London and the South East. Five per cent of CSU vacancies were for positions in the South West, salaries were only a little behind those of some other regions, and graduates the South West are as likely to find employment as those from other regions. Perhaps the issue here is the 'visibility' of career options in the South West.
- Lastly, CSU data shows that the key areas of work on offer in the region are in engineering and technology services, finance, and information technology jobs.

## 5. Soft Landings: Destinations After Graduation

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Having discussed what students and graduates are looking for from the labour market – and examined the vacancies available to them on graduation we now turn to look at what actually happens once they leave higher education. In so doing we draw on the Higher Education Statistics Agency’s (HESA) First Destinations Survey (FDS) six months after graduation and also our own (small) survey of South West graduates one year after they had left higher education.

As in the last Chapter we are mainly looking at four groups: SW Loyals; Returners; Incomers; and Poached Graduates, but we also have an interest in Lost SW Graduates and Students and Passers Through (Table 5.1).

Each year, HESA conducts a survey of people completing full-time sub-degree, first and post graduate degrees to find out what they do in the roughly six months after graduation. Of the 1999/2000 crop of new graduates, surveyed around new year of 2001, 218,770 replied to the survey, a response rate of 77 per cent (HESA, 2001).

Of these, 152,640 had found work, 9,460 of them in the South West (six per cent). Many new graduates find themselves working in London (17 per cent) and the South East (11 per cent). We were able to divide up the majority of respondents into our graduate

**Table 5.1: Typology of graduates’ relationship to the South West**

<b>Types of ‘graduate’</b>	<b>Where from?</b>	<b>Where studied?</b>	<b>Where job?</b>
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

*Source: IES, 2002*

**Table 5.2: Numbers of graduates, by type**

<b>Graduate type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Missed Opportunities	117,750	86
Poached Graduates	1,880	1
Passers Through	4,180	3
Incomers	1,270	1
Lost SW Students	4,140	3
Returners	2,660	2
Lost SW Graduates	910	1
SW Loyals	3,620	3

*Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000*

typology (see Table 5.2. There are between 20 and 30 new graduates who could not be allocated to a category due to incomplete data). The vast majority are Missed Opportunities. Of those with some relationship with the South West, the main groups are Passers Through, Lost SW students and SW Loyals.

## **5.1 Where do students from the South West work?**

Forty-nine per cent of South West domiciled new graduates finding employment are working in the region six months after graduation, *ie* are SW Loyals or Returners. Along with the South East and the East Midlands, the South West is a 'net exporter' of new graduates (see Table A3.15 in Appendix 3). In all other regions, at least half of those going to university return to, or never leave their home area. For the South West, the number of Lost SW Students outnumber Lost SW Graduates by 3.5 to one. This suggests that encouraging local people to study in the region may improve graduate retention rates.

### **5.1.1 Where else do they go?**

A large number of new graduates originating from the South West take employment in London and the South East. These destinations account for 12 and 11 per cent of the South West's students. Only three per cent end up working in the neighbouring West Midlands, and only two per cent in Wales.

## **5.2 Where do graduates working in the South West originate from?**

Two-thirds of new graduates working in the South West are originally from the region. SW Loyals are a larger group than Returners, confirming the importance of attracting local people to study in their home region.

**Table 5.3: Where do graduates working in the South West come from?**

<b>Region of domicile</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
South West:		
Gloucestershire	750	8
Somerset	580	6
Cornwall	540	6
Devon	1,300	14
Dorset	750	8
Wiltshire	670	7
West of England	1,690	18
	<hr/>	
	6,280	66
London	190	2
South East	770	8
West Midlands	470	5
East Midlands	210	2
Eastern	310	3
North East	60	1
Yorkshire & Humberside	150	2
North West	280	3
England	190	2
Wales	350	4
Scotland	120	1
Northern Ireland	40	0
United Kingdom unknown (including the Channel Islands and IoM)	20	0
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>9,460</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

Of the remaining one-third who work in the region but are from elsewhere, Poached Graduates exceed the number of Incomers. However, the pool of new graduates neither from nor studying in the South West is very large, and only a small proportion – around one per cent – choose to come and work in the South West. In comparison, 23 per cent of those from outside of the region who come to study in the South West stay and find work in the South West.

As Table 5.3 shows, Devon and the West of England supply the largest numbers of new graduates. Otherwise, the origins of new graduates working in the region are spread fairly evenly across the country, neighbouring regions supplying slightly more than those further afield.

**Table 5.4: Where did graduates working in the South West study?**

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<b>Region of Institution</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
London	390	4
South East	1,140	12
South West	4,910	52
West Midlands	550	6
East Midlands	390	4
Eastern	200	2
North East	140	2
Yorkshire & Humberside	380	4
North West	420	4
Wales	790	8
Scotland	140	2
Northern Ireland	~	0
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>9,460</i>	<i>100</i>

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~ fewer than 10

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

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### **5.2.1 And where did they study?**

Over half of the new graduates working in the South West studied in the region. Again, neighbouring regions, particularly the South East supply more new graduates to the South West than do other regions, though the region attracts small numbers of graduates from HEIs across all of Great Britain.

Looking at South West graduates who choose to remain in the region to work, the majority are SW Loyals rather than Incomers (Table 5.4). Again, we see that those working in the South West often have links with the region. For example, 2,660 respondents to the FDS return home to work in the South West after graduating from HEIs outside of the region.

New graduates working in the South West are drawn from 148 different HEIs. The most common are listed in Table 5.5. As expected, local institutions top the list, followed by nearby Welsh and South Eastern institutions. For reference, Table A3.21 in Appendix 3 shows the percentage of graduates entering employment for each institution in the South West in the HESA data, by subject area. It also shows the proportion entering employment in the South West. Those institutions which appear to have low proportions of their graduates entering employment often have high numbers continuing with their studies – see Table A3.29 in Appendix 3, for full details of destinations by institution. There is also a relationship between the range of subjects offered by institutions and the proportion entering

**Table 5.5: Which HEIs did new graduates working in the South West attend?**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
University of the West of England, Bristol	1,290	14
The University of Plymouth	1,000	11
Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE*	490	5
The University of Exeter	440	5
Bournemouth University	420	4
Bath Spa University College	360	4
The University of Bath	300	3
College of St Mark and St John	270	3
The University of Bristol	250	3
The University of Southampton	240	3
Cardiff University	230	2
Southampton Institute	190	2
University of Wales, Swansea	150	2
Other institutions	3,830	40
<i>Total of new graduates working in the South West</i>	<i>9,460</i>	<i>100</i>

\* now the University of Gloucestershire

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

employment, as graduates from certain subjects are more likely than others to continue with their education.

### **5.2.2 Do different HE routes offer different outcomes?**

For our graduate typology, we need information about where people are from, where they studied, and where they went after graduating. The FDS only collects the location of main activity for those moving into employment and further study. As we wish to examine all outcomes, we therefore have to switch temporarily from our graduate typology to a more simple, two stage model, namely people:

- from the South West who studied in the region (SW-SW)
- from the South West who studied elsewhere (SW-EW)
- from elsewhere who studied in the South West (EW-SW)
- who are from outside and studied outside of the South West (EW-EW).

Overall, six months after graduating, 60 per cent of new graduates have entered work, and a further eight per cent have returned to or remained with a previous employer.<sup>1</sup> The SW-SW group (including SW Loyals and Lost SW Graduates) differ slightly in that 14 per cent return/remain with a previous employer, and only 57 per cent enter new employment. The EW-SW group (Passers Through and Incomers) have the reverse pattern – they are more likely to enter new employment, and less likely to return to a previous employer.

There is little variation between the four groups in the proportion who enter self-employment or seek employment or training (including the unemployed). Overall, one per cent enter self-employment, and six per cent seek employment or training.

Around one in five new graduates continue with their education, however, the SW-EW (Lost SW Students and Returners) and SW-SW groups are less likely to move into further study or training. Seven per cent of the SW-EW group report that they are not available for employment, compared to five per cent among all new graduates.

In general women are slightly more likely to find themselves in a new job than are men. New graduates of black and minority ethnic origin appear to be less likely to return to a previous employer, but a higher proportion enter further study or training. Men are more likely to find themselves still seeking employment or training six months after graduation, as are those with access or 'other' qualifications on entry to higher education. Black and minority ethnic new graduates in the SW-SW group are much more likely to be seeking work than other graduates.

We see that a much higher proportion of those who graduated with a first class degree continue with their education, and that this is particularly true of new graduates who are not originally from the South West. Graduates with thirds are also more likely to stay in education than the average. However, those new graduates originally from the South West who are awarded third class/pass degrees are twice as likely than those from outside the region to pursue their studies.

Among new graduates originally from the South West, a higher percentage of those with non traditional qualifications on entry to university/college, and those with higher education qualifications at entry, enter a new job in the first six months after graduating.

In summary, the routes through higher education offer, by and large, similar initial outcomes. However, patterns of advantage

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<sup>1</sup> Although not included in the 2000 FDS, the Royal Agricultural College was able to supply us with an overall first destinations return. A slightly higher percentage of RAC graduates entered employment.

and disadvantage are also repeated amongst those from the region, compared to those from outside the South West, and for those studying in the South West, compared to the rest of the UK.

## 5.3 Does the quality of work vary ...

In Chapter 1, we talked about the evolving structure of the graduate labour market, and how traditional patterns of initial graduate employment have diversified. As a consequence, the few measures we have of first-stop jobs for new graduates, such as the CSU data on graduate vacancies, no longer capture the true range or numbers of graduate opportunities. Although we do not have a good measure of the availability of initial graduate opportunities, we can assess the 'quality' of work from the FDS.

As we have seen from the leavers survey, whilst many have realistic initial expectations for the labour market, some people leaving higher education are ambitious and have high expectations of their careers. Therefore, the quality of initial opportunities is important to understanding graduates' choices about whether to stay or leave the region. The FDS offers three measures of employment quality:

- whether the work is paid or unpaid
- how long the employment is anticipated to last, and
- the type of occupation.

Occupations are ranked using the Office for National Statistics' Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). The first three groups, managerial and senior administrative, professional, and associate professional occupations are typically associated with higher levels of responsibility, status and qualifications. As such, this 'higher level' employment is usually considered appropriate for graduates. The FDS does not, as yet, include salary data.

### 5.3.1 ... between the regions?

As Table 5.6 shows, the South West is 'middle of the table' in terms of the quality of employment for graduates' initial employment. London and the South East have a clear advantage in terms of the proportion of new graduates securing longer term/permanent positions, whereas neighbouring Wales performs relatively poorly on this measure. A slightly smaller proportion of new graduates working in the South West obtain higher level work than is the case in the UK as a whole. This adds further weight to our conclusion that the labour market in the region is not as bad as leavers' and graduates' perceptions, which has implications in terms of raising the profile of the region's opportunities.

**Table 5.6: Quality of graduate employment by region**

	<b>Paid (%)</b>	<b>Not a fixed term employment (%)</b>	<b>Higher level occupations * (%)</b>
London	98	74	77
South East	98	72	73
<b>South West</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>72</b>
West Midlands	97	67	74
East Midlands	98	67	70
Eastern	96	69	77
North East	97	65	72
Yorkshire and Humberside	97	70	71
North West	97	64	71
England Region unknown	96	66	74
Wales	92	58	68
Scotland	98	65	75
Northern Ireland	98	69	76
United Kingdom unknown (including the Channel Islands and IoM)	99	73	75
Overseas	93	49	80
Not known	91	62	69
<i>All graduates</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>74</i>

\* Standard Occupational Groups 1, 2 and 3

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

### **5.3.2 ... between different types of graduate?**

Using these three measures outlined above, the quality of graduate employment for each of our types of graduate can be estimated, as shown in Table 5.7. The majority of new graduates of all types are in paid employment, however, there is greater variety in the proportions with longer term/permanent job contracts, and in higher level occupations. This evidence suggests that Lost SW Graduates obtain more secure and more challenging work in the months following graduation, and that fewer Returners make such a successful transition from HE to the graduate labour market. Returners are more likely to have very short term contracts (*ie* with less than three months left to run) than any other group. This suggests that there may be a place for targeted information about graduate level opportunities in the region during the final year of study for Returners to help prevent them getting stuck in temporary, low skill occupations, for example, directing individuals to [www.gradsouthwest.com](http://www.gradsouthwest.com). There may also be a role for South West HEIs to provide ongoing careers

**Table 5.7: Characteristics of initial graduate employment**

	<b>Paid (%)</b>	<b>Not a fixed term employment (%)</b>	<b>Higher level occupations* (%)</b>
Missed Opportunities	97	69	74
Poached Graduates	97	71	83
Passers Through	99	73	75
Incomers	99	69	72
Lost SW Students	97	68	76
Returners	97	66	58
Lost SW Graduates	98	78	84
SW Loyals	99	72	77

\* Standard Occupational Groups 1, 2 and 3

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

support for Returners, provision of which at present appears to be variable across the region, and sometimes subject to charge. These initiatives would necessitate identifying people originally from the South West who are studying elsewhere, perhaps through local education authority contacts.

Paid employment is the norm among all groups, regardless of personal characteristics. We will therefore concentrate on the length of the employment contract and level of occupation.

Among Returners, women tend to have poorer employment outcomes than do men, whereas, for Lost SW Graduates, men appear to have obtained higher quality work than women.

The number of black and minority ethnic new graduates in our graduate typology is often small. With that caveat in mind, it appears that, black and minority ethnic graduates who are originally from the South West fare worse than their white peers in obtaining higher level employment. The only exception is Lost SW Students, where 84 per cent of black and minority ethnic new graduates finding employment, obtain positions in SOC groups one, two or three, compared with 75 per cent of white Lost SW Students. However, Lost SW Graduates and Returners from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to find themselves in very temporary work (*ie.* with three months or less to run) and less likely to obtain long term/permanent contracts – this is also true for black and minority ethnic Poached Graduates.

Women are more likely to be working on a part-time basis than men. Interestingly, women in the Returners and the SW Loyals groups have higher levels of part-time work than do other women.

Our graduate interviewees gave us further insights into the quality of the work they had found, one year after graduation. Other than those graduates who had entered teaching or gone on to post-graduate study, there was more or less an even split between those who felt they had eventually found graduate level work and those who had not, although there was an element of confusion for some graduates in deciding whether or not their current job was actually at a graduate level. Interestingly some felt that being a graduate in their first full-time position was a proxy for being in a graduate job. Some related it to the amount of challenge or responsibility demanded by the job. Others related it to whether or not there were other graduates employed in similar roles and some defined the level according to the salary and benefits they received or a combination of one or more of these factors.

A SW Returner, graduate in Communications, described her current job as being at graduate level because:

*'It gives planned progression, ongoing training and development, makes everyday use of the skills I learnt on the degree and it pays more.'*

Similarly, a SW Loyal, graduate in Business Administration and Management & Transport Planning, said:

*'I would consider this to be my first real job, definitely because it is my first full-time, permanent position with a lot of responsibility and because it's a graduate position.'*

A SW Returner, graduate in Economics and Economic Social History described her job by saying:

*'This is my first full-time job, so yeah, this is my first real job.'*

However, she went on to add that it wasn't really a graduate level job as she thought it was:

*'... a bit of a waste of my skills.'*

As would be expected, only a couple had experience of 'people' management responsibilities, as they were still at an early stage of their careers. However, several had gained management experience particularly those working for small firms where the scope of the job role was often flexible. A good number of those who had joined business partnership type schemes had been offered 'real' graduate level jobs, (although usually short term contracts) with their sponsoring employers. Most were enthusiastic about the support and nature of the work provided by the sponsoring employers.

A SW Returner, an Environmental Science graduate, said:

*'I had made loads of applications, over 15 for environmental jobs- the project placement helped so much and I learnt how to organise events and how to deal with the press as well.'*

Other graduates had found work in jobs that they considered to be at least partly career-relevant if not necessarily graduate level employment. Those who were working in graduate jobs it seemed that either the degree was specifically relevant or that the graduate had gained some relevant experience, usually as an undergraduate. Frequently graduates had strategically moved jobs or undertaken voluntary work to position themselves for a 'real graduate' job. Most graduates viewed interesting and challenging work as being critical components of the jobs they enjoyed. However, a 'happy' working environment was also important and graduates had often changed jobs in order to find more enjoyable working environments. Typical comments include:

*'It's very challenging.'*

*'The opportunity of being able to make a real contribution to the company.'*

*'The people I work with are brilliant. Nice environment. I like working in a small company where you can give a more personal service.'*

## 5.4 Employment by location

Table 5.8 shows the location of new graduates working in the South West approximately six months after their graduation. New graduates do not spread themselves evenly across the region. Few find work in Cornwall or Somerset, and one-third take employment in West of England which includes the major cities of Bath and Bristol.

New graduates working in each of the sub-regions conform, by and large with the profile for graduates in the South West as a whole, with one or two small exceptions (see Table A3.16 in Appendix 3 for full details).

- A higher proportion of new graduates working in Cornwall are in the 30 plus age group. They are less likely to be working in managerial roles, but more likely to be working on a self-employed basis. Education and creative arts graduates are over represented, whilst 'commercial' subjects such as computing, business and administration, and social, economic and political studies are under-represented.
- Devon also has a slightly more mature new graduates, and has fewer new graduate workers in the 21-24 year age group. Sixty-one per cent studied in the South West, compared to 52

**Table 5.8: Initial graduate employment in the South West, by sub-region (all origins)**

<b>Location of main activity</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Cornwall (Cornwall, Isles of Scilly)	450	5
Devon (Devon, Plymouth, Torbay)	1,790	19
Dorset (Dorset, Poole, Bournemouth)	1,080	11
West of England (South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset, Bristol)	3,190	34
Gloucestershire	1,210	13
Somerset	590	6
Wiltshire (Wiltshire, Swindon)	1,150	12

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

per cent in the region as a whole. Half of the new graduates working in Devon are SW Loyals.

- In Dorset, fewer new graduates in employment are found in professional occupations, but more are classified as associate professionals. The sub-region has more new graduates with degrees in subjects allied to medicine and business and administration than other sub-regions, however there are fewer from engineering courses. One in four studied in the South East, and only 44 per cent studied in the South West. As a result, Dorset has a relatively high proportion of Returners, as do Somerset and Wiltshire.
- New graduate employment in Gloucestershire is typical of that in the South West as a whole, except that nine per cent studied in the West Midlands, and ten per cent in Wales. One quarter of new graduates working in Gloucester and Wiltshire are Poached Graduates.
- A greater proportion of the new graduates employed in Somerset are female (61 per cent). Of the small number of new graduates working in Somerset and Cornwall a relatively high proportion are professionals. Wiltshire displays a similar pattern. Proportionately, more new graduates in Somerset return to a previous employer than in other sub-regions. One in five new graduate employees in Somerset have an education degree.
- In Wiltshire, computing and business and administration degrees are more common among new graduate employees than is the case in other sub-regions. Only 38 per cent studied in the South West, and 19 per cent went to university in the South East. Like Somerset, Wiltshire has relatively few Incomers.
- In West of England, more new graduate workers have higher level (*ie* SOC 1, 2 or 3) occupations. Ten per cent graduated in a Welsh HEI.

## 5.5 Employment by sector

We can also examine the characteristics of the graduates who enter the priority sectors. The FDS collects information on the industrial group of each new graduate employee. We have been able to identify most of the main priority sectors (see Table A3.22 in Appendix 3 for further details).

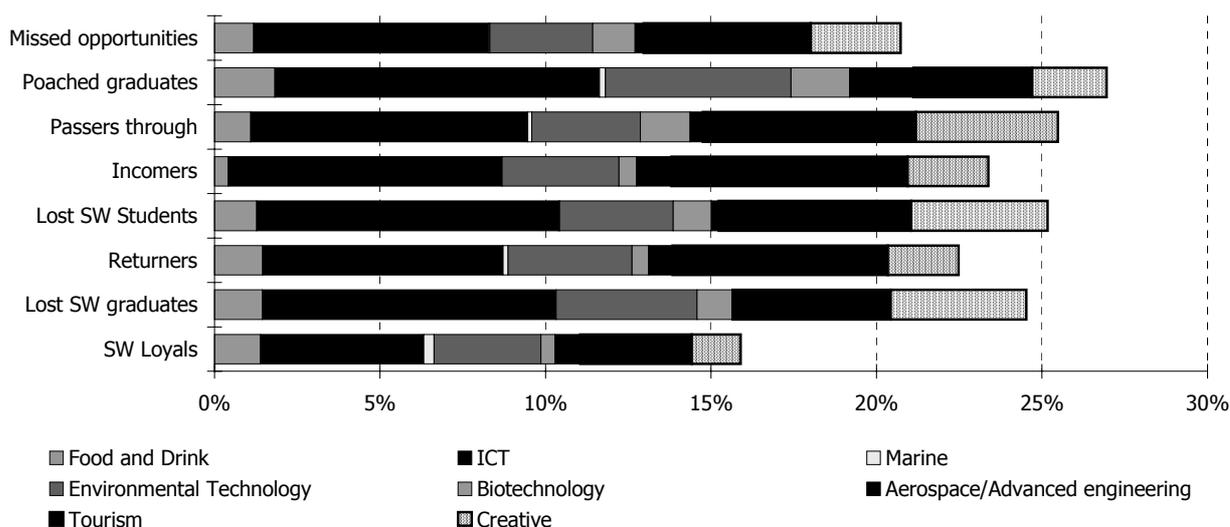
With the exception of food and drink, tourism, environmental technology/biotechnology and the creative industries, the priority economic sectors employ more male new graduates than female, despite women making up the majority of new graduates in work. New graduates in the priority economic sectors also tend to be younger, typically 21-24 years of age, except for Environmental Technology/Biotechnology and Biotechnology where around one quarter are 25-29 years old.

### **How many of each type of student end up working in the priority economic sectors?**

Six months after graduation, around one in five new graduates in the UK have found work in one of the priority economic sectors. However, as Figure 5.1 shows, a higher percentage of Poached Graduates, find work in these sectors than do SW Loyals. The data behind this chart are give in Table A3.18 in Appendix 3. Whether this mismatch is one of overall numbers, degree discipline or the 'softer' attributes of local graduates is an interesting question, but one which the secondary data sources cannot address.

In each priority economic sector except Marine for which the numbers of new graduates involved is tiny, there are greater numbers of Returners and Poached Graduates than there are Incomers and SW Loyals. In other words employers are 'importing' more new graduates than they are hiring from local institutions. This suggests that either the output of local universities is in some way failing to meet the demand from regional employers or that those from South West institutions are not available to local recruiters. Whether this mismatch is one of overall numbers, degree discipline or the 'softer' attributes of local graduates is an interesting question, but one which the secondary data sources cannot address.

**Figure 5.1: Industry of employment for each type of new graduate (UK)**

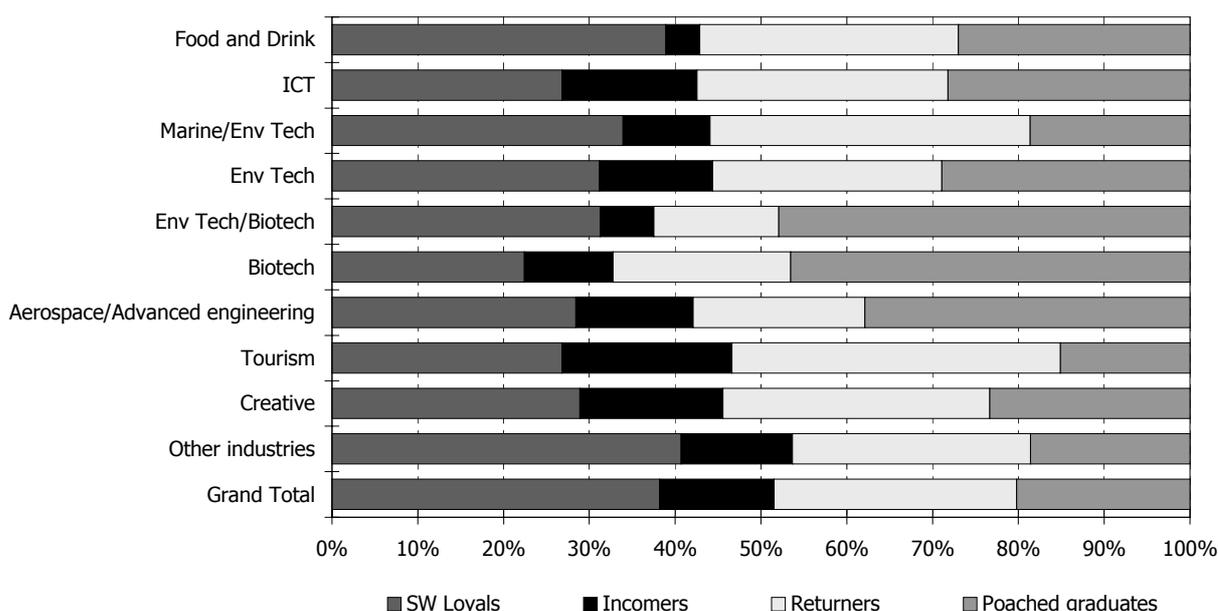


Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

Figure 5.2 looks at the same data from the opposite perspective. It shows the type of new graduate finding employment in each of the priority economic sectors. From this chart we can see that some industries employ more new graduates from local institutions (SW Loyals and Incomers) than do others. Biotechnology (N = 58) employs the lowest proportion of South West graduates. Tourism employs the highest proportion of new graduates with some link to the South West, be it domicile, study or both.

However, the 'quality' of the opportunities in each sector vary. As Table 5.9 outlines, new graduates working in the Food and Drink

**Figure 5.2: Type of new graduate employed by the priority economic sectors in the South West**



Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table 5.9: Quality of new graduate employment in priority economic sectors in the South West**

	<b>Paid</b>	<b>Not a fixed term employment</b>	<b>Higher level occupations*</b>	<b>N</b>
Food and Drink	97	80	62	130
ICT	99	78	73	650
Marine	99	80	81	20
Environmental Technologies	98	77	78	360
Biotechnology	98	75	82	70
Aerospace	99	93	91	100
Tourism	98	70	46	440
Creative	93	64	71	180
Other industries	98	68	73	7,300
Unknown	93	61	57	30
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>9,270</i>

\* Standard Occupational Groups 1, 2 and 3

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

and Tourism industries are less likely to hold 'higher level' employment than in other priority economic sectors. The employment of new graduates in the creative industries is less secure and more short term than other new graduates, and one in fifteen posts is unpaid/voluntary. One in five posts taken in tourism are part time.

Looking at the distribution of new graduate employment in the priority economic sectors across the UK, (Table A3.19 in Appendix 3) the South West accounts for a sizeable proportion of new graduate employment in the marine, and aerospace/advanced engineering industries. London and/or the South East are the location of many new graduate jobs in ICT, the creative industries, biotechnology and tourism.

Finally, in Table A3.20 in Appendix 3, the number of new graduates finding employment in the priority economic sectors in the South West are given for each of the South West institutions available in the HESA data. The science and technology bias in the priority economic sectors is mirrored by a similar leaning in the degree disciplines offered by some institutions. Consequently, 40 per cent of new graduates in priority economic sectors have degrees in either engineering and technology, computing or biological and physical sciences. Ten per cent had degrees in the creative arts, and 13 per cent in business and administrative studies.

However, more detailed data from Bristol University on the employment destinations of their alumni with degrees in subjects which align with the priority economic sectors, shows that the

relationship between subject and employment is not straightforward. For example, relatively few graduates in aerospace engineering enter engineering related employment, despite many being sponsored throughout their course. Large proportions of biochemistry, neuroscience, microbiology, *etc.* graduates continue with academic research rather than enter employment in biotechnology related industries. In ICT the opposite is true – the majority enter employment, and it is usually ‘subject appropriate’. Finally, one-quarter or more of earth science and environmental geoscience graduates are not in employment or study six months after graduation. This suggests that for students in these subject areas, clearer signposting of job opportunities in the region’s priority economic sectors at or before graduation could be useful.

### **What is the industrial profile of new graduate employment in the South West?**

Table A3.27 in Appendix 3 gives a breakdown of all industry by region of employment. The industrial profile of new graduates employment in the South West follows the pattern established by the UK as a whole quite closely (see Table 3.27 in Appendix 3). This singles out the South West among the regions, the majority of which have very distinct industrial profiles. One-quarter of new graduates in the South West work in financial intermediation, a slightly smaller proportion than in the UK as a whole, but ahead of most other regions outside London and the South East. At eight per cent of new graduates, the region employs a relatively large number in public administration and defence, when compared to most other regions. Education and health and social work are also common destinations for new graduates in the South West.

## **5.6 Graduates survey data on activity**

We can also look at destinations at a slightly later date by examining what the graduates in our survey are doing one year on from finishing their first degree. Assuming a three-year degree course length, we estimated that a large proportion of those applying to HEIs for entry in 1998 would graduate by the summer of 2001, and by the time of the survey would have been in the labour market, *etc.* for approximately one year. However, a proportion of our sample will have either taken a ‘gap year’ before entering HE, or chosen a four year course. The move from student to graduate can be seen in Figure 5.3.

One year on, most new graduates are in employment, and a permanent contract is more common than a temporary arrangement. As we have seen from the FDS data, approximately one-fifth of new graduates defer entry to the labour market and undertake another course of study. The proportion in our survey

is a little below that, however the survey was conducted in July, when many courses will have finished.

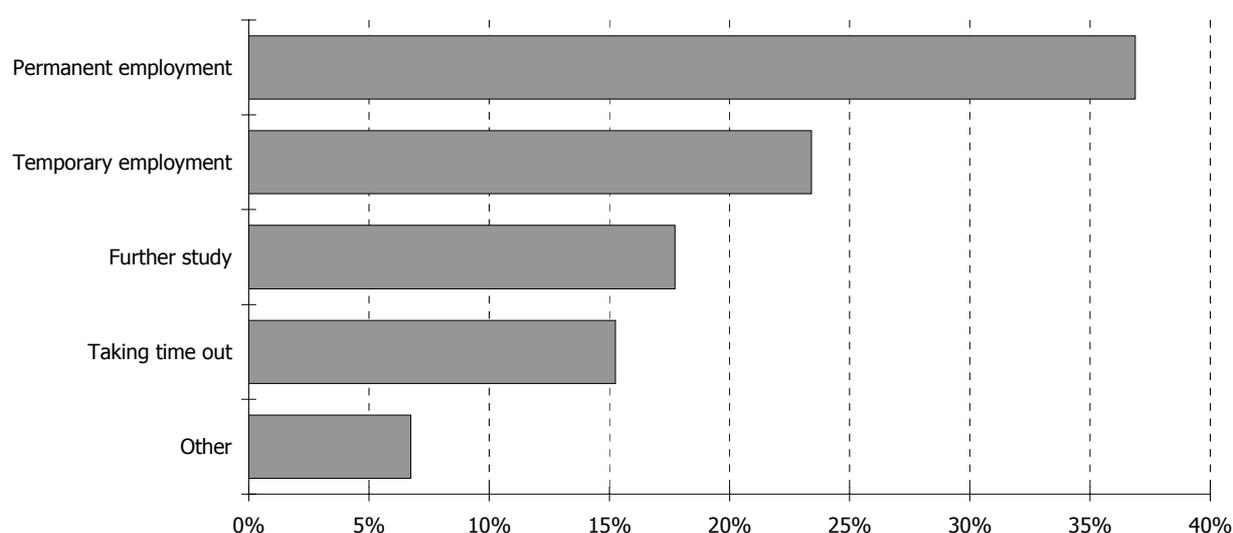
Roughly one in seven graduates are still 'taking time out' at this stage of their career. Of the six per cent (18 people) who ticked 'other' for their activity in July 2002, the majority were unemployed.

### 5.6.1 Early career trajectories

However, Figure 5.3, like the FDS is a very general snapshot, and disguises the real variety in the career paths of individuals. With further analysis, the career trajectories of individuals can be plotted. The 277 graduates who gave information about what they were doing at the end of every quarter from July 2001 to July 2002 had followed 71 different career paths, although seven career paths accounted for three quarters of all graduates in the UCAS applicants' survey. The most common career paths are listed below:

- continuous employment – in employment at each quarter end from July 2001 to July 2002 – 67 people, or 24 per cent. Thirty eight of these (13.7 per cent) had been in permanent employment throughout, 18 (six per cent) had moved from temporary to permanent work, and 10 (four per cent) had been temporary workers for the whole period
- continuous study – 32 (12 per cent) were in further study over the period in question
- study/employment – 30 (11 per cent) had moved from further study into employment
- employment/study/employment – a further 27 graduates (10 per cent) had sandwiched further study between two periods of work

**Figure 5.3: Main activity of 1998 UCAS applicants, July 2002**



Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

- time-out/employment – in total, 22 (eight per cent) had initially taken time out but were now in work
- study/time-out – 18 people (six per cent) were now taking time out following a period of further study
- employment/study – another 12 people (four per cent) had worked then returned to study.

Looking at the people in employment in July 2002, the majority (61 per cent) had found a permanent job, and only one person was self-employed. Most people (again, 61 per cent) described their job as being of professional or similar status. The most common occupations were business, finance or legal professional (20 per cent) and teaching or academic professionals (15 per cent). However, over one-third of those in employment were in non-professional jobs, typically, administrative and clerical positions (12 per cent) and retails/sales assistants, cashiers or bar workers (24 per cent).

### **5.6.2 Quality of employment**

As some occupations do not sound like they are traditional graduate jobs but may well offer scope for new graduates to begin a career and build their skills, we asked recent graduates for more information about the nature of their jobs. Their answers are summarised in Figure 5.4. Interestingly, only 23 per cent of new graduates hold a position which was previously held by a graduate, but a higher proportion believe that their job either uses their graduate skills and knowledge, or involves responsibility for technical accuracy. Just over one-third said that none of these characteristics which we would associate with a 'graduate job' applied to their employment.

There is considerable overlap between these groups. For example, the majority of those in non-professional jobs or in temporary employment describe their employment as not having graduate characteristics.

In summary, using any of these measures of the 'graduate-ness' of employment, up to one-third of recent graduates with an association with the South West are underemployed.

Furthermore, the employment opportunities of those leaving the South West are perhaps better than those staying or returning. It is interesting to see (Table 5.10) that those graduates who have found employment outside of the South West (Lost SW students and Passers Through) are the most likely to have professional jobs, or a job with graduate characteristics, using the criteria in Figure 5.3. Lost SW Students are also most likely to have a permanent contract.

**Table 5.10: Employment characteristics of new graduates**

	Professional job (%)	Permanent employment (%)	'Graduate' type job (%)	N
SW Loyals	65	59	74	35
Lost SW students	74	70	79	33
Returners	48	55	58	31
Incomers	42	60	32	19
Passers through	67	59	67	27
<i>Total</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>146</i>

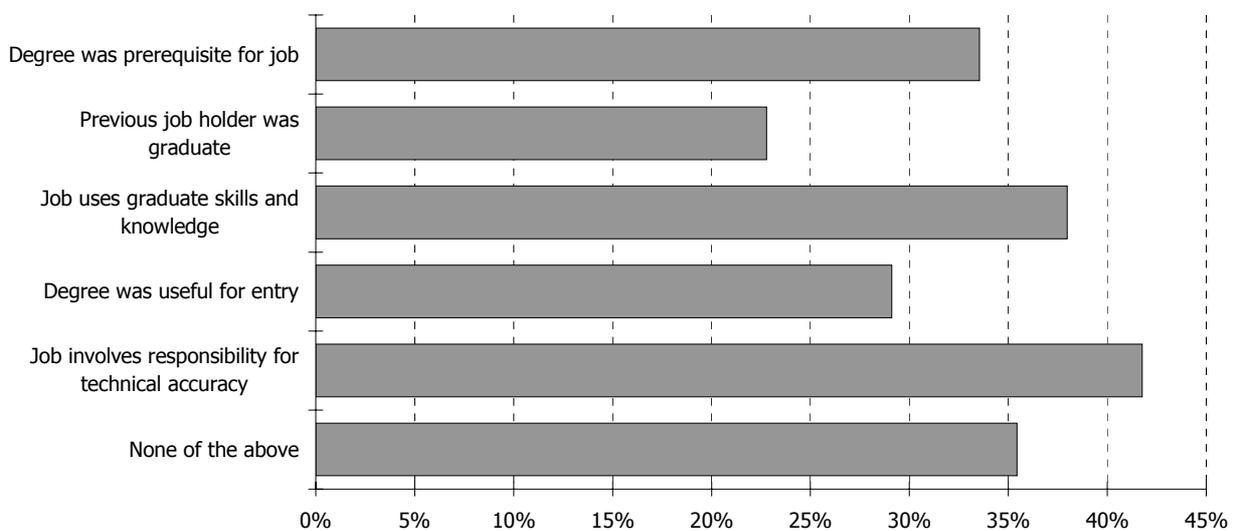
Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

### 5.6.3 Salaries

Overall, recent graduates in our sample earn on average (median) £13,000 a year though there are great variations in earnings. Those in professional jobs or those in jobs which their occupants describe as having graduate characteristics earn £15,000 or more, whereas their counterparts typically earn £10,000. Those in permanent employment also have higher earnings than those on temporary contracts. Academic success, in terms of degree class also appears to be influential – as expected, those with a first class degree report higher earnings than those with second class degrees. However, there is little variation between sexes or age groups at this stage, and although those currently based in the South West appear to earn less than those working elsewhere, the difference is not statistically significant.

There is however, a big difference between the earnings of our recent graduates, and the average salaries given for the region in

**Figure 5.4: Characteristics of recent graduate employment**



Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

the CSU data, underlining the wide range of graduate career outcomes.

#### **5.6.4 Working in priority sectors**

One year after graduation, just under 30 per cent of working respondents were in the priority economic sectors, including engineering (six people) biotechnology (five), environmental technologies (two), ICT (eight), food and drink (eight), leisure and tourism (13) and the creative industries (four). However, the largest employer, the public sector accounted for the same proportion of employment. Other big employers included financial and business services (20 per cent) and the retail industry (18 per cent). Approximately two-thirds of those working in priority economic sectors were currently based in the South West.

#### **5.6.5 Training of graduates entering employment**

Among our graduate interviewees there were mixed feelings towards the quality of graduate training and size of employer. Some felt that small companies in the SW expect graduates to be able to 'hit the ground running' without further training investment, or prefer to recruit graduates who might have already undertaken work related training elsewhere. Such 'second bounce' graduates were perceived to be advantaged in the labour market over newly qualified graduates. This highlights the importance of initiatives like the STEP scheme and relevant work experience.

A SW Returner with an English degree explained:

*'The good points and the bad points are intertwined. It (the SW) hasn't been overrun by multi-nationals, but in my experience multi-nationals make very good employers. There are lots of small employers who take advantage of employees – they work you into the ground, there's no standard for wages – they are trying to get as much as possible for as little as possible.'*

Conversely a number of graduates working in smaller companies felt that although formal graduate training was not available there were real advantages and opportunities. They reported having good opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and confidence in smaller companies. Often they had been expected to take on higher level tasks and felt they had gained a wider or more holistic view of the business and business related issues. This was particularly the case for those who had participated in a business partnership scheme. This confirms that the positive attitudes of final year students towards training opportunities in small and medium sized organisations (see earlier) are well founded.

*'I did some things in my first job, like going to senior management meetings and presenting ideas and proposals. My friends say you just*

*don't get to do that in larger companies – but the formal off the job training in my job was almost non-existent.'*

Interestingly some of those who wanted more formal training but had found graduate training programmes difficult to find were committed to achieving their career goals through different mechanisms.

A Lost SW graduate in Business Economics, who was hoping to continue his learning with the support of his employees commented that:

*'I'd love to be able to do a Masters at some point, but I'm not in a position to ask the company for that yet.'*

## 5.7 Self-employment

Our graduates survey was too small to pick up any great detail about the self-employed. Only three people had any experience of self-employment as their main activity, with only one of those being self-employed at the time of the survey. Seven people expected to be self-employed by July 2004.

However, there is more scope for examining self-employment among new graduates in the HESA First Destinations Survey data. Whereas our survey of graduates looked at graduate careers approximately one year after graduating, the FDS picks up career choices a little earlier, around six months after graduation, which may be a little early for those aspiring to self-employment (Tackey and Perryman, 1999).

The FDS found 2,440 new graduates considered self-employment to be their main activity, 1.1 per cent of the 218,770 replying to the survey. Only 330 of these individuals can be allocated to our

**Table 5.11: Self-employment, by type of graduate**

	Main activity		Secondary activity	
	%	N	%	N
Missed opportunities	1.4	2,120	0.6	837
Poached graduates	0.7	20	0.3	7
Passers through	1.3	60	0.3	16
Incomers	1.7	40	0.4	8
Lost SW students	1.1	70	0.7	40
Returners	1.5	40	0.6	17
Lost SW Graduates	1.0	10	0.8	8
SW Loyals	2.1	90	0.6	26
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>2,440</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>959</i>

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table 5.12: Characteristics of graduate self-employment**

	<b>Paid</b>	<b>Higher level occupations*</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>N</b>
	%	%	%	
Missed opportunities	90	67	70	2,120
Poached graduates	89	67	78	20
Passers through	93	58	78	60
Incomers	32	86	83	40
Lost SW students	91	74	77	70
Returners	89	57	70	40
Lost SW Graduates	100	64	91	10
SW Loyals	90	71	68	90

\* Standard Occupational Groups 1, 2 and 3

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

graduate typology and have a connection with the South West. The rate of self-employment varies slightly between the different types of graduate, from 0.7 per cent of Poached Graduates, to 2.1 per cent of SW Loyals (see Table 5.11), but accounts for a tiny proportion of new graduate career choices.

The proportion of new graduates entering self-employment varies from institution to institution. Arts colleges have much higher rates of self-employment, and this is true of both Dartington College of Arts (9.4 per cent self-employment) and Falmouth College of Arts (6.3 per cent). In general, the more traditional universities have lower rates of self-employment, for example Exeter has 0.5 per cent, and Bath has 1.0 per cent. Creative arts graduates form the bulk of the self-employed for each graduate type, ranging from approximately one-third to one half in each category.

Although women make up the majority of graduates, those choosing self-employment more likely to be male. Most self-employed new graduates are 21-24 years old, although more mature graduates are over-represented among SW Loyals.

Patchy data are available about whether the self-employed are paid or unpaid, have higher level occupations or work full time. These data, are summarised in Table 5.12. Note the small numbers involved.

There are 1,170 graduates who give their secondary activity as self-employment, approximately 0.5 per cent of all new graduates, and 120 of these have a connection with the South West (*ie* are not Missed Opportunities). Forty of these are Lost SW Students.

## 5.8 Where do those entering further study go?

Nearly two-thirds of those entering further study immediately after graduating from a South West HEI, choose to stay in the same region to study. Additional data from Bristol University's First Destinations Survey return suggests that around three quarters of their new graduates who progress to further study stay with the Institution, and that very few move out of the town. This suggests that there may be some variation in the graduate retention of each institution in the region, though of course, some institutions do not have such comprehensive post-graduate courses as others.

Only 330 new graduates originating from the South West but studying elsewhere, chose to return to the region for their next course (Returners).

We noted in Chapter 4 that undergraduates looking for work prioritise the developmental and personal interest factors in their choice of employer. A recent, national survey by the University of Sheffield (OST, 2000) of undergraduates considering a post-graduate course found that, like those looking for work, personal development and interests were the most important influences on their decision to continue studying. This suggests that there is competition between employers and HE for new graduates, with the career route offering the maximum interest and developmental opportunities likely to be a preferred option.

## 5.9 Key points

- Almost 10,000 new graduates found work in the South West at the beginning of 2001: two-thirds of these had lived in the South West prior to their studies, and half of these had studied in the region's higher education institutions. A substantial proportion (over half) of those finding employment in the region were working in the West of England (which includes the major cities of Bath and Bristol) or Devon (which includes Plymouth).
  - However, more of those working in the region had both previously lived in the region and studied in the region (SW Loyals) than had returned to their home after studying elsewhere (Returners).
  - This indicates the importance of 'growing your own' in that encouraging local people to study in the region may improve graduate retention rates.
  - Encouraging people from outside to study in the region is also important as up to a quarter stay and find work in the region.

- Despite the inflow of new graduates into the region, the South West is a net exporter of graduates. It loses more individuals with high level skills than it gains. However, this can be said of other regions, even neighbouring regions such as the South East.
- The majority of movement into higher education and into work would appear to occur within the South West region, however interaction also occurs with neighbouring regions.
  - Almost a quarter of newly qualified graduates who were originally from the South West find jobs in London and the South East.
  - Three in ten new qualified graduates working in the South West had studied in HEIs in London, South East, West Midlands, or Wales.
- Routes through education – whether from the South West or not, and whether studying in the South West or not – offer broadly similar initial outcomes, after six months:
  - Over two-thirds of new graduates enter work.
  - One per cent enter self-employment (many from creative arts courses).
  - Six per cent seek employment or training.
  - And one in five continue with their education (many of whom do so in the university or college of their undergraduate studies).
- Data from our graduate survey shows a similar pattern of outcomes, one year after studies, with the majority of new graduates in employment. Over the year since graduating many have moved into permanent work after either taking time out, taking temporary work, or engaging in further study.
  - Common occupations were in the business, finance, legal, teaching, and academic professions.
  - Average median salary is £13,000, rising to £15,000 for those in graduate level or professional roles.
- Looking at the quality of jobs taken by new graduates in the South West, it can be seen that the region is an average performer.
  - However, home grown graduates leaving the region to work (Lost SW Graduates) had better quality jobs than other groups, whilst
  - Those returning home to the South West after studying elsewhere had the poorest quality jobs, and
  - Black and minority ethnic individuals originally from the South West had the greatest difficulties in obtaining higher

level employment, suggesting that this group need particular support.

- Using data from our graduate survey, up to one-third of new graduates with a connection to the South West (*ie* not necessarily working in the South West) are underemployed. It would seem that those leaving the region are better off, in terms of gaining graduate level work, than those staying or returning to the region.
- Interviews with graduates indicate that there is confusion amongst individuals as to what constitutes a quality 'graduate' job. Some equate this to having levels of responsibility, graduate colleagues in similar roles, and/or opportunities for training and progression; whilst some equate this to full-time work. There was some indication that graduates make strategic moves via less valuable roles in order to obtain what they would class as a 'real graduate job'.
- Each sub-region within the South West has its own characteristics in terms of the new graduates finding work *eg* Cornwall and Devon tend to provide opportunities for older and more local graduates, whereas the West of England appears to offer more higher level occupations.
- Looking at sectors identified by the region as priorities, South West employers in these sectors (particularly in the biotechnology sector) would appear to import more new graduates than they are hiring from local institutions. This perhaps suggests that the output of local institutions is in someway failing to meet the demand from regional employers.
- The priority sectors do not all offer quality graduate jobs.
  - The food and drink, and the leisure and tourism sectors are less likely to hold higher level employment.
  - Also, the employment terms for new graduates in the creative industries tend to be less secure and more short term than for graduates in other sectors.

# 6. Graduate Careers in the South West

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We have now reached the end of our journey from students' final year of their first degree through entry into the labour market and their first jobs to building a career as a graduate. We now turn our attention away from students' expectations and experiences of entering the labour market to examine data on the employment in the South West and in particular where graduates are employed and their careers. We also report what graduates think of working in the South West as a place to build a career.

At this point we draw heavily on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of people in employment as well as our survey and interviews with South West graduates.

In terms of our grid of graduate types (Table 6.1) we are mainly concentrating on four groups, SW Loyals, Returners, Incomers, and Poached Graduates.

## 6.1 The size of the graduate resource in the South West

In total, 423,000 graduates (with either a first or a higher degree) live in the South West, according to the LFS. At nine per cent of the total population, the proportion with degrees is the same as seen in the UK as a whole. However, the proportion of the population with a first or higher degree varies greatly among the regions. In the North East only six per cent have a degree, whereas

**Table 6.1: Typology of students' relationship to the South West**

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Types of 'student'	Where from?	Where studied?	Where job?
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

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Source: IES, 2002

in London 16 per cent are graduates. Looking at comparable figures for the regions neighbouring the South West, Wales and the West Midlands both have nine per cent, and the South East has 11 per cent.

The pool of graduates is reduced somewhat if the count is limited to those of working age. Ninety seven per cent of the graduates living in the South West, 412,000, are of working age. This compares with nearly 99 per cent in the UK as a whole. No other region has a lower proportion of its graduates in the working age range, though the North East comes close.

As workers occasionally live in one region, but work in another, the figures for the number of graduates working in the South West differ slightly. There are 368,000 graduates working in the South West, 15 per cent of the South West's workers. Around 357,000 of these are of working age, again 15 per cent of the working age population of the region. This is slightly lower than seen across the UK as a whole (17 per cent), although there is a great deal of regional variation. In London 29 per cent of workers (of working age) have a degree. At the other extreme, in the North East only 12 per cent do so. The figures for neighbouring regions are South East 18 per cent, West Midlands 14 per cent, Wales 13 per cent.

In summary, there are 334,000 graduates of working age who both live and work in the region. An additional 20,000 reside in the region and work outside. Slightly more, 23,000, work in the South West but live elsewhere – 12,000 of these live in London and the South East. As such the South West is, by a small margin, a net importer of graduate skills and knowledge.

### **6.1.1 Economic activity and inactivity**

Although the South West is fairly typical in the proportion of its residents who are graduates, a higher percentage are past retirement age than in other regions. Conversely, a slightly lower proportion of those working in the South West are graduates than is the case in other regions.

Looking at working age graduates living in the South West, 86 per cent are in employment, three per cent meet the International Labour Organization's (ILO) definition of unemployment, and 11 per cent are inactive. This is very similar to the pattern seen across the UK as a whole. Northern Ireland has the highest percentage in employment (91 per cent), and Wales the lowest at 84 per cent. The two other neighbouring regions have slightly higher employment rates; West Midlands 90 per cent, South East 89 per cent.

Focussing first on economically active graduates, in the South West 313,000 are employees (76 per cent), 42,000 are self-

employed (10 per cent) and 12,000 are ILO unemployed (three per cent). Full details of economic activity by region are given in Table A3.25 in Appendix 3. From this table we can see that:

- a relatively low proportion of the South West's graduates work as employees, however
- although other regions have higher numbers of self-employed graduates than the South West, only London has a higher proportion (12 per cent)
- the proportion unemployed in the South West is the same as that for the UK as a whole, and in neighbouring regions it is lower. This suggests that there is not a large 'surplus' of graduate labour in close proximity to the South West.

The South West has around 45,000 degree holding residents who are economically inactive. At 11 per cent, this is a little above proportion in the UK as a whole (nine per cent), but lower than the North East (12 per cent) and Wales (14 per cent). In neighbouring South East region, the percentage is at the national average, whereas the West Midlands has the lowest rate of economic inactivity at eight per cent.

It is possible to unpick the reasons for economic activity. Respondents to the Labour Force Survey are asked a series of questions about their job search, availability and if they would like work. Two categories can be made in the 'inactives' group:

- those who are either seeking work but are not available, or not seeking but would like work
- those not seeking work and not wanting work. Within this group, it is possible to identify those who say they are either retired or do not need or want a job.

There are few graduates in the first of these categories. The percentage of graduates in the 'not seeking and not wanting work' category varies from just under six per cent in the West Midlands and the South East to over ten per cent in Wales. The South West has a relatively high proportion of graduates in this category – nine per cent, compared to seven per cent in the UK as a whole.

Furthermore, when the reasons for not wanting work are examined, the South West has a different profile from other regions. Three per cent of the region's working age graduates (12,000 residents) state that they do not want or need a job, or that they have retired early. This compares with under two per cent nationally. No other region has a higher number of working age graduates giving this answer to the economic activity questions.

The age profile of these graduates supports the idea that they are winding down to full retirement. Those South Western graduates who do not want/need a job or who are retired have are typically

in their late fifties, whereas the remainder of the not seeking/wanting work group are in their late thirties.

In consequence, although the South West appears at first to have a graduate base of similar proportion to other regions, a greater proportion have withdrawn from the labour market than elsewhere. This perhaps has implications for local employers and the region in that strategies to encourage renewed participation in the labour market may be required. There is also a related issue in that these graduates may need support and encouragement to maintain and update their skills.

## 6.2 Graduate characteristics

Graduates working in the South West are fairly typical in terms of gender. Just over half (55 per cent) of the graduates working in the South West are male. However, along with the North East, Wales and Scotland, a much higher proportion (98 per cent) of the South West's graduates describe themselves as White. Greater London has the highest black and minority ethnic graduate workforce, at 16 per cent. The figure for the UK as a whole is seven per cent.

The South West has fewer working graduates under the age of 30 (24 per cent, compared to 27 per cent for the UK) and aged 30-39 (29 per cent compared to 32 per cent for the UK). A higher proportion are in their 40's (28 per cent, 24 per cent for the UK) and between 50 to retirement age (19 per cent, 16 per cent nationally). Wales has the oldest graduate workforce, Northern Ireland the youngest.

There is further evidence of the relative 'maturity' of the South West's working graduates:

- we estimate that one quarter of the graduates working in the South West graduated after the age of 30, compared to 23 per cent in the UK as a whole. Only the North East and the North West have a higher proportion of their graduate workforce who were mature students. London and Northern Ireland have the lowest proportion
- a higher proportion (43 per cent) of the region's graduate resource graduated more than 20 years ago than is the case in the UK as a whole (38 per cent). Seventeen per cent of graduates working in the South West completed their full-time education more than thirty years ago, against 14 per cent in the UK. London's graduates are much more 'recent' in this respect. Only Wales has a more 'mature' graduate workforce by this measure
- average (mean) length of service varies across the regions from just under six years in London to just over eight years in Northern Ireland. However, at 7.3 years in the South West, the region's average is close to the UK average, 6.9 years. This

result can be read in two ways – either graduate careers in the region are at least as stable as those in most of the UK, or the labour market (and hence job changing) is less hectic.

Taken together, the more mature profile of the graduate workforce in the South West poses succession planning issues. Retirements will diminish the graduate workforce of the South West to a greater extent than most other regions unless the South West can maintain its current level of graduate workers, either through continuing inward migration, or improved retention of South Western domiciled or educated graduates. The region's age profile also has implications for its skills base, and consequently for retraining, or continuing professional development initiatives, especially given the emphasis on high technology and 'new economy' sectors in the South West's priority list.

Table A3.26 in Appendix 3 shows the number of graduates working in the South West by subject of study, compared to the UK as whole. It shows that the South West has a slightly higher proportion of graduates in broad subject areas which align roughly with some of the region's priority economic sectors. For example, seven per cent of the South West's graduates have a degree in the biological sciences (which includes biotechnology), compared to five per cent in the UK as a whole. Similarly, physical/environmental sciences (relevant to the environmental technology sector), Engineering (relevant to both Advanced Engineering and Marine sectors) are well represented in the South West. The South West also has an equal share of both creative arts and mathematical science and computing graduates. Regrettably, it is not possible to drill down further to specific, rather than general subject areas, in order to calculate the exact number with directly relevant degrees. The best indicator we have for the number of graduates with specific degrees comes from the HESA data on the most recent graduates, discussed above.

While the South West may be atypical in terms of the numbers of students following courses in medicine and subjects allied to medicine, the proportion of graduates in these subjects in employment in the South West are similar to that of the UK as a whole. The South West also has a smaller proportion of its graduate workforce with social science or business and financial studies and a higher proportion with education degrees.

Everyone in our definition of a graduate has either a first or higher degree. Seventy per cent of graduates working in the South West have a first degree as their highest qualification, and five per cent have a doctorate, much the same as for the UK as a whole. Where the South West differs is in the proportion who have attained other postgraduate qualifications such as PGCEs (13 per cent, compared to ten per cent for the UK) and masters degrees (12 per cent, compared to 16 per cent).

### **6.2.1 South West Graduate employment by sector**

In section 5.5 we painted a picture of the industrial distribution of new graduate employment in the South West. We found that, unlike new graduate employment in most other regions, it was very similar to the pattern in the UK as a whole. This holds true when we look at all graduate employment in the LFS. Again, graduates working in the South West have an industrial profile very similar to that of the UK as a whole. Graduate employment in the South West is dominated by the service industries, with only sixteen per cent finding work in the industrial sector, the majority of these (43,000 or 12 per cent) in manufacturing. The real estate, renting and business activity sector accounts for just over one-fifth of graduate employment, as does education. Among the neighbouring regions, the West Midlands and South East have a greater proportion in employment in the industrial sectors, typically in manufacturing. Wales has the lowest level of non-service employment.

Public administration and defence is another large employer in the South West, and employs 35,000 (10 per cent), a slightly higher proportion than in the UK as a whole. As a proportion, fewer work in financial intermediation than might be expected.

Surprisingly, given the South West's reputation for tourism, the number of graduates employed in Hotels and Restaurants is too small to be estimated.

#### **Graduates in priority economic sectors**

In total, 101,000 graduates working in the South West are employed in priority economic sectors. This is 27 per cent of all graduates working in the South West. The majority, 81,000, are employees, and 19,000 are self-employed.

In Table 6.2 the estimated number of graduates in each of the priority economic sectors is shown. Some priority economic sectors have been merged either to improve sample sizes or because of overlapping constituencies. For a technical note on the industrial coding used to create priority economic sectors see section A3.2.1 in Appendix 3.

ICT and the Creative Industries are more 'graduate rich' than other priority economic sectors. ICT also employs the highest number of graduates. Although Biotechnology and Environmental Technology appears to have a low percentage of graduate workers, we believe the proportion may be underestimated due to issues with the coding of building and construction industries in the Labour Force Survey – see section A3.2.1 for details. A regional breakdown of the proportion of the workforce in each of the priority economic sectors which has a first or higher degree is provided in Table A3.28 in Appendix 3. In total, 20 per cent of employment in the priority economic sectors in the South West is

**Table 6.2: Number of graduates of working age, working in the South West, in priority economic sectors (main job only)**

Priority Economic Sector	Number of first or higher degree holders '000	Employees in sector with first or higher degree %
Advanced engineering and Marine	11	27
Biotechnology and Environmental Technology	24	9
Food and Drink	~	~
ICT	28	37
Creative industries (DCMS definition)	23	43
Tourism	~	~
All other industries	258	15
All industries	357	15

~ estimate below threshold of statistical reliability (10,000)

Source: IES/LFS Winter Quarter 2001

held by a graduate. The regions vary widely – just 12 per cent of priority economic sector employment in Wales is held by graduates, compared with 51 per cent in London.

In A3.23 in Appendix 3, the number of graduates employed in priority economic sectors in each region of the UK is given. Following the distribution of graduate employment across the regions, the lion's share of employment in priority economic sectors is found in London and/or the South East. The exception is Advanced Engineering and Marine where the South West dominates, accounting for 28 per cent of employment in the sector. Interestingly, the South West has approximately one in ten of its graduates in ICT employment – a very similar proportion to London and the South East.

### **6.2.2 The sub regional picture**

The numbers of graduates working in each of the South West's sub regions are shown in Table 6.3. This table is drawn from the Spring 2000 quarter of the Labour Force Survey, the most recent quarter permitting a sub-regional analysis.

To maintain confidentiality, a great deal of data about personal characteristics, *eg* age, ethnicity, and earnings, are withheld by ONS from the sub-regional data, therefore, a profile of graduates by sub-region has not been attempted. The data restrictions also mean that it is not possible to limit analyses to graduates of working age only.

The South West's graduates are not evenly spread across the sub-regions. The highest concentration of graduates is found in West of England, which also houses the highest number of graduates

(117,000) among the sub-regions. High proportions of graduates appear to be associated with urban areas – more than one in ten of the residents of Swindon are graduates, as are one in seven in Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset. In contrast, there are relatively few graduates in Somerset or Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The distribution of graduates across the sub-regions mirrors the location of HEIs. This distribution has a number of implications, for example, for the delivery of careers, training and development guidance. Different strategies may be required to deliver services to graduates, perhaps including web-based services for those in rural areas or drop-in centres for those in urban areas. For example for graduates in rural areas, directing them to services such as [Connect2learning.co.uk](http://Connect2learning.co.uk) which gives free information and advice on work and learning opportunities across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole; or using the FDS mailing list to identify rural graduates and target them with advice.

In addition to the density of graduates in the sub-regions, the current utilisation/availability of the graduate resource may be pertinent to the location of any new businesses or inward investment requiring a highly qualified workforce. Although with further analysis the Labour Force Survey, estimates are nearing the point where their statistical reliability could be questioned, it appears that there may also be some evidence of a variation in the economic activity of graduates within the sub-regions. At one end of the spectrum is Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where approximately 70 per cent of graduates are in employment. At the other is Wiltshire (Wiltshire and Swindon), where the comparable figure exceeds 90 per cent. In the South West as a whole, 87 per cent of graduates are in employment.

### **6.2.3 Self-employment**

The information given in this Chapter largely relates to employees working in the South West. There are, however, a large number of self-employed people contributing to the region's economy.

Across the UK as a whole, eight per cent of people of working age are self-employed. The South West has the highest percentage, 10 per cent or 308,000 residents. The South West has more than twice as many self-employed people per head of population, than does the North East.

Looking at graduates only, approximately 10 per cent, that is 42,000 of the 412,000 working age graduates resident in the South West are self-employed. Only London has a higher percentage – 12 per cent. For some regions an estimate for the numbers of self-employed graduates cannot be made due to small sample sizes, but across the regions, the proportion in self-employment is generally at or a little below the UK average of nine per cent.

**Table 6.3: Number of graduates by sub-region of residence**

	('000) Graduate (first or higher)		Total
	Yes	No	
<b>Gloucestershire</b>			
Number ('000)	49	504	553
<i>Col %</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>West of England</b> (South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Bristol)			
Number ('000)	117	874	991
<i>Col %</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Somerset</b>			
Number ('000)	25	461	486
<i>Col %</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Devon</b> (Devon, Plymouth, Torbay)			
Number ('000)	63	986	1,050
<i>Col %</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Cornwall &amp; Isles of Scilly</b>			
Number ('000)	21	463	483
<i>Col %</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Dorset</b> (Dorset, Poole, Bournemouth)			
Number ('000)	47	636	683
<i>Col %</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Wiltshire</b> (Wiltshire, Swindon)			
Number ('000)	56	547	602
<i>Col %</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Row %</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>All SW</b>			
Number ('000)	378	4,471	4,848
<i>Row %</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: IES/LFS Spring 2000 quarter

The small sample sizes restrict the extent of the analysis we are able to conduct. Interestingly our rudimentary calculations suggest that for the South West, self-employed graduates are little different from the main body of the self-employed. For example:

- the self-employed are, on average several years older than employees, reflecting perhaps the time taken to build the skills and confidence required for business start up. The mean age of the self-employed (regardless of qualifications) in the South West is 44 years, compared to 38 years for employees. Among graduates, the mean age of South Western employees is just under 38 years, compared with 45 years for the self-employed
- in terms of the gender profile, seventy four per cent of all of the self-employed are male, as are seventy one per cent of graduate self-employed
- the self-employed have, on average, been in their current job longer than employees. Both graduate and all employees have seven years service. Among the self-employed, graduates have a length of service of 10.8 years, compared to 10.2 years for all self-employed residents of the South West.

On this evidence, graduate self-employment does not appear to be 'special' in any way. As the graduate and non-graduate self-employed look so similar, a need for tailored self-employment/start up advice, beyond that supplied in parallel with general careers advice by the HEI careers advisory services has not been identified. However, the Labour Force Survey records only the barest details about the self-employed. Most importantly, the type or value of graduate businesses in the South West are not visible in the secondary data sources available. In many other respects, graduate self-employment may have a significant role to play in the regional economy.

### 6.3 The 'quality' of employment

The quality of graduate employment is of interest in understanding, or even marketing, career and location choices in different regions. 'Quality' of employment can be estimated using proxy measures. In this section, the proxies used for quality of employment are:

- the proportion in higher level occupations, *ie* managerial, professional and associate professional occupations. These are typically referred to as 'graduate jobs' as they often require a degree for entry or utilise graduate level knowledge and skills
- participation in work related education and training
- tenure, *ie* permanent versus temporary contracts.

Pay and career progression are other measures of the quality of employment, and that is dealt with in later sections.

Overall the quality of graduate employment in the South West is comparable in most respects to that in other regions.

Eighty-five per cent of graduates working in the South West have graduate jobs, the same proportion as in the UK as a whole. Among the regions, the proportion of graduate workers in higher level occupations varies little, between 83 and 87 per cent, with the exception of Northern Ireland at just 75 per cent.

Focussing on employees (*ie* excluding the self-employed), access to work related training and development is also fairly typical in the South West, where 47 per cent of employees report training or development in the previous three months. Although more than half of graduate employees in Yorkshire and Humberside and the West Midlands receive training, in this respect careers in the South West still have the advantage over those on offer in London, where only 41 per cent took part.

Tenure, the type of employment contract people have, infers greater security of employment, confers a wider range of workplace rights and benefits and offers other advantages outside of employment, *eg* in access to mortgages. Although the majority of employees in the South West enjoy permanent contracts, at 88 per cent the proportion is below the average for the UK as a whole (91 per cent). Only in the North East do a smaller proportion of graduate employees have permanent contracts. Across the border in the West Midlands, 93 per cent have permanent contracts.

There are few hints at the quality of life of respondents to the LFS. However, one insight is the time taken to travel to work. Graduates in the South West spend 27 minutes, on average, travelling to work each day – only in Northern Ireland and Wales is the travel to work time shorter. Given the physical size of the South West, this is an interesting result, and hints at the clustering of graduate distribution across the region. Graduates who work in Greater London spend 46 minutes journeying to work. This analysis of travel to work times is taken from the Autumn 2001 quarter of the Labour Force Survey.

### **6.3.1 The quality of employment for recent graduates**

In the previous chapter, we looked at graduates' transitions from study to first employment. In this sub-section, we take a slightly longer view, looking at the characteristics of graduate employment across the first four years. Early career opportunities in the region play an important role in attracting and retaining new graduates for the South West. For example, we know from previous IES research (see Barber, forthcoming) that new graduates prioritise training and development in their choice of employer. In summary:

- in terms of access to higher level occupations, the South West is similar to the rest of the UK, but offers a smaller proportion of graduate jobs than London. Seventy two per cent of

graduate employees in the South West have a managerial, professional or associate professional job, compared with 71 per cent in the UK as a whole. Neighbouring regions have similar proportions in higher occupational groups, with the exception of Wales, where 77 per cent of recent graduate employees have graduate jobs. London also has 77 per cent of graduate employees in higher level occupations

- a slightly lower proportion of South Western graduate employees experienced work related training in the previous three months than in the UK as a whole, (46 per cent, compared with 49 per cent). The range among the regions is quite large, from 43 per cent in East of England, to 58 per cent in the East Midlands
- 85 per cent of recent graduates working in the South West have a permanent job, the same proportion as in the UK as a whole. The South West compares well against regions such as the North East and Yorks and Humberside, where fewer than 80 per cent of recent graduates have permanent contracts.

The nature of the work recent graduates do can be assessed from the industry of their employer, and the graduate's managerial and supervisory responsibilities. It is difficult to say anything conclusive about the industrial spread of new graduates, as the sample sizes involved are too small. However, by allocating industries to either a broad industrial or service sector, we can see that in the South West and the UK as a whole, the majority (86 per cent) of new graduates work in the service sector. Neighbouring regions have a similar pattern, with the exception of the West Midlands which has a slightly larger industrial base – one quarter of new graduate employees in the West Midlands work in industry (mostly manufacturing).

One-third of recent graduate employees in the South West have either managerial or supervisory responsibilities, in line with the UK as a whole. As we will see in section 6.3.3 on career progression, this proportion increases as graduates become more firmly established in their careers. This, with the service sector bias of new graduate employment, suggest that the focus for both employers training programmes and graduates' development needs sit towards the 'softer' skills, rather than technical, and at a managerial or higher level, rather than operational level.

### **6.3.2 Graduates earnings in the South West**

As we have seen earlier, starting salaries from traditional graduate recruiters for positions in the South West are on a par with most other regions, outside London (see section 4.3.1). We will now look at the real earnings, rather than offered salaries, for the full range of jobs that graduates do in the South West.

**Figure 6.1: Gross weekly median pay in main job for graduate (first and higher) employees of working age, Winter 2001**



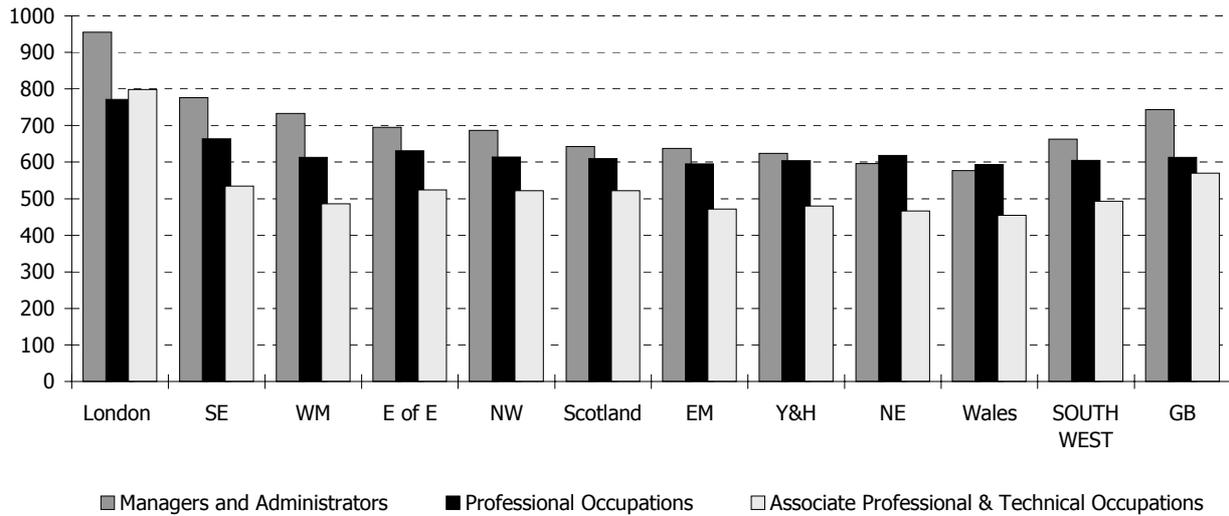
Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

Graduate earnings in the South West appear to be relatively low. As Figure 6.1 shows, earnings in the region are the same as those in Northern Ireland and the North West, and are not dissimilar to those in the East and West Midlands – all of which cluster at the lower end of the graduate pay spectrum. Graduate earnings in the South West are 91 per cent of the UK average, £100 a week lower than for graduates working in London. Earnings in the capital are far ahead of those in any other region, and as London accounts for a large proportion of the UK’s graduates this inflates the UK average for graduate earnings. When London is excluded from the calculation, graduates in the South West still earn only 95 per cent of the UK average. If house prices were factored into the calculations, perhaps following CSU’s methodology, we would expect that ‘real earnings’ would appear lower still. The real earnings of graduates in the South West are not as favourable as those found in most regions in the UK.

Focussing down on graduates in higher level occupations, further analysis of the LFS reveals that, the region has a particular issue with managerial and professional salaries:

- those in the South West in managerial jobs (SOC group 1) earn £577 a week, 83 per cent of the UK average (88 per cent when excluding London). Managerial earnings in the South West are the lowest among the regions with a suitable sample size to support this calculation
- for graduates 10-14 years from graduation, relatively speaking, their salaries are no better or worse at this point in their career than they were at the start. However, their salaries are still well behind those on offer in London and the South East, having started from a much lower base

**Figure 6.2: Gross weekly earnings for full-time, adult male employees, by region, April 2001**



Source: IES/NES 2001 Table E13

- associate professionals (SOC group 3) in the South West earn £375 a week, 89 per cent of the UK average (96 per cent when excluding London). The South West is again at the lowest end of the regional spread, along with Yorkshire and Humberside and the North West
- this picture from the Labour Force Survey (Winter 2001) is upheld by figures from the New Earnings Survey (see Figure 6.2).

A similar pattern emerges for graduates working in those occupations not traditionally associated with higher education qualifications (SOC groups 4 to 9). In the South West, graduates in non-graduate jobs earn around £219 a week, 84 per cent of the UK average (91 per cent when excluding London). Again, graduates in the East Midlands have lower earnings (£202 a week).

As we have seen in previous chapters, although pay is not the prime influence on graduate employment choices, it is still an important consideration. Hence, in addition to overall levels of graduate earnings it is important to consider firstly, graduate starting salaries and secondly, salary progression.

The Labour Force Survey allows us to estimate the earnings of graduates in the first stages of their careers (*ie* those who have completed their full-time education in the last four years) in each region. The LFS calculations confirm the CSU pattern in that, at £311 a week, earnings for recent graduates in the South West are no less favourable than those in many other regions, but as expected, are behind those available in London (see Figure 6.3).

**Table 6.4: Gross weekly earnings (£) of graduates of working age, by region**

	Years since completing full-time education						
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+
North West	279	404	508	490	~	635	558
Yorks & Humberside	265	410	596	618	548	~	542
East Midlands	248	500	359	423	577	~	481
West Midlands	277	427	467	~	554	635	497
East of England	356	529	538	587	481	481	553
London	413	497	635	589	635	623	615
South East	365	471	577	500	542	635	548
<b>South West</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>481</b>
Scotland	352	438	525	493	577	531	538
All UK	346	442	531	531	565	558	538

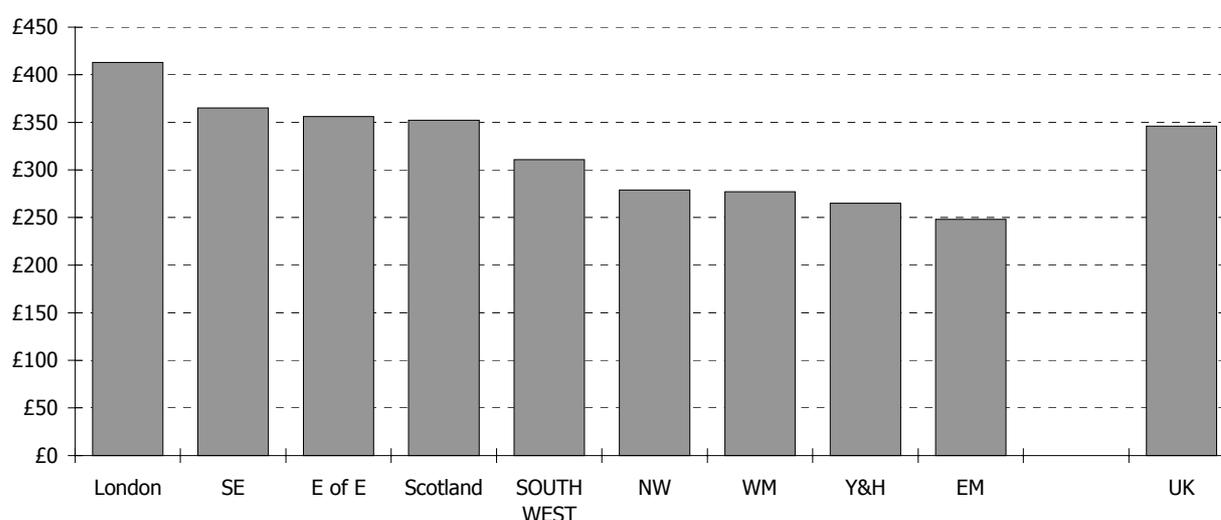
~ estimate below threshold of statistical reliability (30,000)

No estimate can be made for NE, Wales and Northern Ireland due to small sample sizes

Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

By taking the difference between someone's age at the time of the Labour Force Survey interview, and their age when they completed their full-time education, it is possible to make a rough estimate of the number of years an individual has spent in the labour market. Graduates can then be divided into cohorts. Using this information, we can estimate the rapidity or otherwise of salary (and career) progression opportunities, based on the progress of current graduates. With earnings, the pattern is easiest to see if earnings for each cohort are indexed to 100, as in Figure 6.4, which shows that:

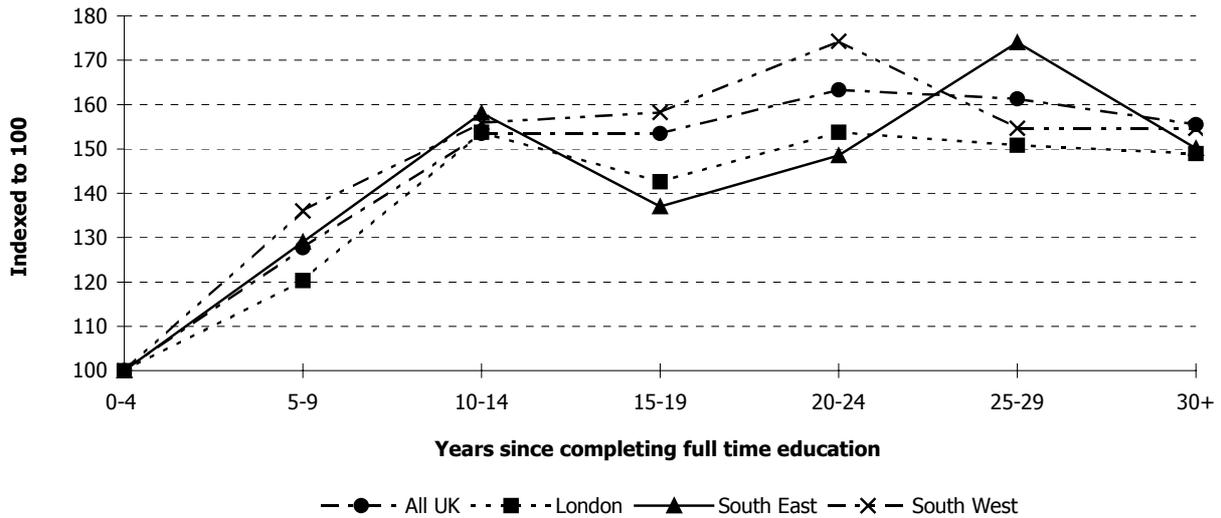
**Figure 6.3: Gross weekly median pay in main job for recent graduate (first and higher) employees of working age, Winter 2001**



No estimate can be made for NE, Wales and Northern Ireland due to small sample sizes

Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

**Figure 6.4: Gross weekly earnings of successive cohorts of graduates**

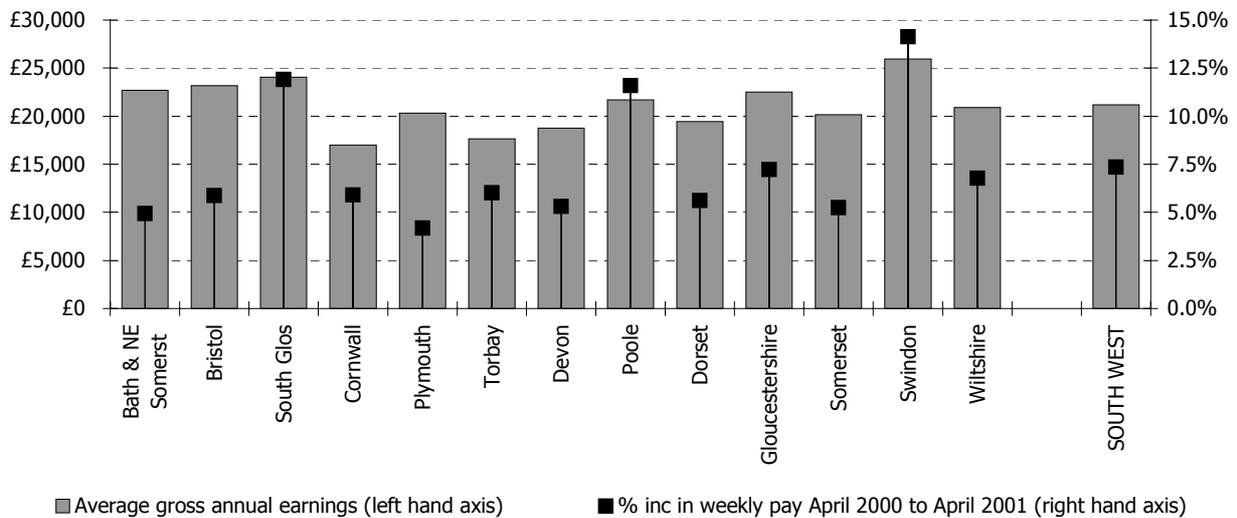


Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

- initial salary progression is faster in the South West than in London or the South East, (although as Table 6.4 indicates, starting salaries are lower)
- for graduates 10-14 years from graduation, there is little relative difference between earnings in the South West, London, the South East or the whole of the UK – in effect, South Western graduates are no better or worse off by this stage in their careers than they were at that start.
- most interestingly, earnings in the South West continue to grow for the next two cohorts of graduates before tailing off for those towards the end of their career.

The Labour Force Survey does not include information about earnings at sub-regional level, however the New Earnings Survey

**Figure 6.5: Gross annual earnings for full-time employees on adult rates, April 2001**



Source: IES/NES 2001, Table A21

does, albeit for the population as a whole, rather than just for graduates.

Figure 6.5 shows gross annual earnings in each of the South West's sub-regions. It also includes a note of how fast earnings grew over the year April 2000 to April 2001. The data hints of labour market 'hot-spots' – earnings have grown fastest in South Gloucestershire, Poole and Swindon, all places where earnings are above the average for the region as a whole.

The picture of salaries given by these data (starting salaries, graduate salaries, and salary progression) provide agencies in the region with an awareness of the relative position of the South West in relation to other regions. Though there is very little which can be done to influence these patterns in the short term, we hope this is helpful in that agencies can anticipate financial objections to working in the region amongst students and graduates and perhaps concentrate on the positive aspects that the region has to offer.

### **6.3.3 How do salary expectations align with reality?**

By drawing together all of our data on actual and expected salaries, we can assess how well students' expectations align with reality. To recap:

- In the leavers survey, those who studied in South West HEIs anticipated earnings of £12,500 a year in the first few months after completing studies; however those who anticipated staying the South West expected earnings of £12,000. Those who expected to get professional type jobs in the region anticipated their earnings to be £15,000.
- One year on we have the graduate survey, which shows that earnings in the region are approximately £15,000 for those in professional occupations. This indicates that students are reasonably accurate in their assessment of salaries in the region.
- However, CSU data on the starting salaries on offer to new graduates for typical new graduate positions in the region, were much higher at £17,900 a year. This suggests that perhaps CSU vacancies are atypical of the full range of real posts in the region.
- Looking ahead even further, final year students from South West HEIs anticipated salaries of £22,000 in three years time for professional work. Those expecting to be in the region at this time correctly predict lower average earnings, relative to other regions, at £20,000 for the same kind of positions.
- The LFS data estimates earnings in the South West, for graduates with up to four years in the labour market, at £16,200 which is lower than our students anticipated for this

stage in their career. However, the LFS estimate is based upon all levels of occupation held by graduates with varying amounts of work experience, which may account for some of the difference. Interestingly, graduates with five to nine years experience earn the salaries that our group of students expect to receive after only three years.

These data suggest that students leaving HEI have a generally negative but fairly accurate picture of salaries in the region.

## 6.4 Career progression

As with salary progression, we can examine the career progress of current graduates to assess the opportunities on offer in the South West relative to other regions. The LFS allows us to chart the proportion in higher level occupations at various career stages, and the adoption of management or supervisory responsibilities.

Across the whole of the UK, 71 per cent of recent graduate employees (*ie.* those with four or fewer years in the labour market) hold managerial, professional or associate professional jobs. This increases to around 84 per cent of those with 5-9 years in the labour market, and just under 90 per cent of successive cohorts. In the South West, 72 per cent of recent graduate employees hold higher level jobs, broadly similar to the proportion in the UK as a whole, but ahead of many other regions including the neighbouring regions of West Midlands (68 per cent) and the South East (70 per cent). However, across the border in Wales, as in London, 77 per cent of recent graduate employees are in higher level occupations. By this measure, entry level positions in the South West are at least as good, if not better, than those in most other regions. Progression also appears to be a little faster in the South West – 89 per cent of those with 5-9 years in the labour market hold managerial, professional or associate professional jobs – otherwise there is little variation from the pattern seen across the UK as a whole.

In the UK as a whole, and in the South West, around one third of recent graduates have managerial or supervisory responsibilities. This increases to around half, then to two thirds for successive cohorts, with minor variations, but no clear pattern among the regions.

### 6.4.1 Graduates views on their career progress

Respondents to our graduates survey were asked about their perceptions of their career experiences and attitudes. We used four statements, rated again on a scale of 1 – strongly disagree, to 5 – strongly agree. The results are presented in Table 6.5.

**Table 6.5: Graduates' perceptions of careers to date, survey of UCAS applicants**

	<b>Overall tendency</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I would be prepared to relocate to improve my career options	Agree	3.72
My career plans are on track	Agree	3.60
My current activity is part of my career plan	Agree	3.47
It is easy to find job to match my skills and abilities	Neither agree nor disagree	2.89

*Nb:* Scores ranged from 1, strongly disagree. to 5, strongly agree. The base has not been reported as it varies for each factor

Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

On the whole, our graduates with one year's experience are slightly positive about their progress to date. On average they agree that their career plans are on track, and are above the neutral point (neither agree nor disagree) for the statement that their current activity is part of their career plan. However, the results suggest that the graduates have not found this progression easy – their answers about how easy it is to find a job to match their skills and abilities err towards the slightly negative. However, they remain career oriented and many would be prepared to relocate to improve their career options – see below.

Unsurprisingly, graduates in professional jobs, and those in jobs which have typical graduate job characteristics, *eg* requiring a degree for entry, are very much more likely to report that their career plans are on track. The same is true for graduates from the more professionally oriented degree subjects, such as health and nursing, and education, but not those from 'vocational' subjects such as business and administration.

Similarly, a higher proportion of graduates in health and nursing and education plus those in engineering and technology, consider that their current activity is part of their career plan. Again, graduates in business and administration are less likely than those from other subjects to agree with this statement. Unsurprisingly, those in non-professional jobs or non-graduate jobs do not agree that their current activity forms part of their career plan. However, those in further study agree with the statement. Those in temporary work do not.

Again, it is people in temporary work who report greater difficulty finding a job to match their skills and abilities, as do the unemployed. Those with degrees in the creative arts/media and leisure and related subjects have found obtaining appropriate work more problematic than those with qualifications in other subjects, especially nursing and health, engineering and technology, and education.

## **Willingness to relocate**

Male graduates, and younger graduates feel more strongly that they would be prepared to relocate to forward their careers. Unsurprisingly, those who have already moved away to either university or work also feel more strongly that they would be prepared to relocate. As Figure 6.6 shows, Passers Through and Lost SW Students feel themselves to be the most mobile.

However, the key message is that although SW Loyals and Returners are the least willing to move, 60 per cent of SW Loyals and 65 per cent of Returners agree that they would be prepared to move to improve their career options – very few graduates at this stage in their career appear to be willing to compromise their career options to remain in the South West.

The data suggest that strong ties to the South West is the factor which inhibits the willingness to relocate for these two types of graduate. Being from the South West is associated with having strong ties to the region, but alone does not have a great influence – witness the willingness to relocate of Lost SW Students. Neither does studying in the SW – Passers Through are the group who view relocating most favourably.

### **6.4.2 Where next?**

In this section we look at graduates' expectations for their future career including how much they expect to earn and their next job.

#### **Future salary**

As we have already seen, graduates currently in employment, approximately one year after getting their degree, earn on average £13,000 a year. Their expectation is that in two years time (July 2004), they will earn a median salary of £20,000, a median increase of 43 per cent (when calculated on a person by person basis). This level of salary growth may be a shade optimistic. A recent survey of major graduate recruiters, offering a mixture of traditional graduate management training schemes and professional entry positions, found that average salaries increase by approximately 45 per cent over the first two years (Barber and Perryman, 2001). However, this figure of 45 per cent relates to graduates who have found 'high-flying' positions in blue-chip companies, and as we have seen, not all of the graduates in our graduates' survey have made such a successful start.

Indeed, graduates who currently find themselves in temporary work, or in positions without the characteristics usually associated with a 'graduate job', have higher expectations of salary growth than do those with permanent contracts, or in graduate jobs.

Incomers and Passers Through appear to expect higher salary growth than other types of graduate, however, the differences are not statistically significant.

### What kind of job is next?

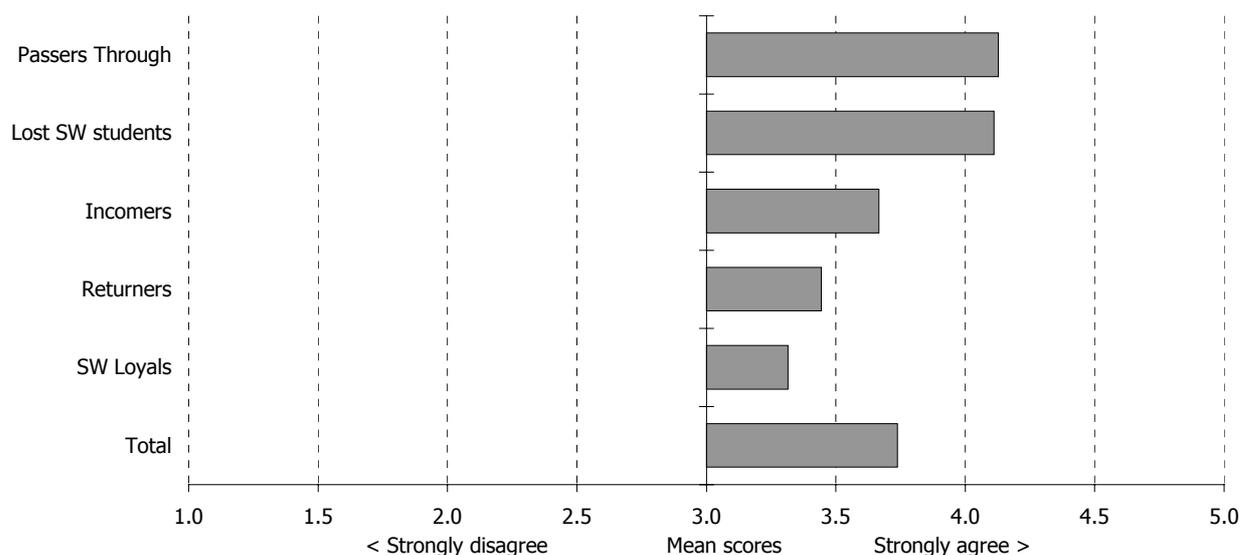
At the time of the graduates survey, 61 per cent of those who gave their main activity as employment described their job as professional level. A large proportion (60 per cent) of those currently on temporary contracts think that they will become professional workers in the next two years, taking the percentage in professional jobs to 86 per cent. Very few (<10) think that they will be studying or withdraw from the labour market. One quarter of those currently in professional jobs plan a change of career.

In two years time, higher proportions expect to have joined the banking, finance and legal professions (25 per cent), the teaching and academic professions (21 per cent) and the creative professions (10 per cent), compared with occupations currently held. Whereas one in three graduates are currently in non-professional work, only one in twelve expect to hold this kind of occupation in the future – the proportion expecting to have administrative, clerical, retail sales, or food service jobs in two years time drops to just seven per cent.

### Where do they expect to find employment?

The breakdown of industries in which graduates expect to work in two years time, differs very little from the industrial profile of their current employment. A similar proportion (31 per cent) expect to work in the priority economic sectors. This includes six people in engineering, three in biotechnology, five in

**Figure 6.6: Willingness to relocate, by graduate type**



Source: IES Graduates Survey 2002

environmental technology, seven in ICT, two in food and drink, eight in leisure and tourism and 16 in the creative industries.

The public services is expected to remain the largest employer, increasing its share of employment to over 30 per cent. Financial and business services is expected to grow slightly, however employment in retail is expected to halve.

Interestingly, only half of those expecting to work in the priority economic sectors in two years expect to be working in the South West at that time.

## 6.5 Graduates views on the South West

Finally we review the opinions we gathered from graduates, in both the survey and the interviews, of what it was like to live and work in the South West.

### 6.5.1 Quality of life in the South West

Quality of life indicators are assembled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2002). They cover various dimension of quality of life, including the economy, social factors such as social inclusion, life expectancy, and crime rates and a wide range of environmental indicators. These show that, when measured objectively, the social and environmental quality of life in the South West is generally on a par with or exceeds that in the South East, Wales and West Midlands. For example:

- the South West has lower crime rates for vehicle theft, burglary and violent crime than the England and Wales average, as does the South East, but not the West Midlands
- river water quality exceeds the England/England and Wales averages for both chemical and biological quality in the South West, as it does in Wales, but not in the South East or West Midlands.

However, in 1999, GDP per head was below the UK average in the South West and all other regions except London, South East and Eastern. HEFCE note however, that there is considerable variation between sub regions and report that in 1998 Cornwall's GDP was 30 per cent below the national average, whilst Wiltshire's was 15 per cent above. The region's share of UK GDP has been growing since the 1970s (Centre for Social and Educational Research, 2001). Manufacturing investment is also higher in the West Midlands and Wales than in the South East and South West (ONS, 2002).

These 'qualities' are not necessarily those prioritised by students and new graduates. Anecdotally, the South West has a lot to offer in terms of 'good looking young people', the coastline and surfing opportunities, Bristol's nightlife, and the friendliness of local

people (Clarke, 2002). The South West also has much to offer a more mature market – Fowey and Tetbury came joint third in *Country Life's* assessment of the best town in Britain (Mitchell, 2001).

Furthermore, the South West is renowned for its outstandingly attractive natural environment. One-third of the region is nationally designated for its landscape quality. Amongst other things, it also has:

- two national parks
- 13 areas of outstanding natural beauty
- two English world heritage sites, and
- two of Britain's community forests.

It is an environmentally conscious region with initiatives such as wind farms, recycling projects and organic farming. It has the largest concentration of monuments, museums and stately homes outside of London and attracts more than 21 million visitors each year with its diverse tourism experience (Centre for Social and Educational Research, 2001).

Many of these aspects were identified in both the leavers and graduates surveys and interviews, and will be explored further in the following section.

### **6.5.2 Living in the South West**

In our graduates survey, we took the opportunity to repeat a number of the core attitude questions about the South West and the labour market in the South West. This allows us to compare the opinions of final year students (leavers) with those a year or so further into their careers. We also have the chance to look at the views of those from South Western HEIs in contrast to those who studied outside the region. The same methodology was used as in the leavers survey, *ie* calculating the mean score from a five point scale where higher numbers indicate stronger agreement and satisfaction.

In Table 6.6, the first four statements have parallels in the leavers survey. The results show that approximately one year on, graduates' opinions on remoteness, pace of life and transport links have improved, but only marginally. However, their opinion about the cost of living in the South West has worsened.

In comparison to those who went to universities outside the region, South West HEI graduates feel more positively that the South West does not feel too far from anywhere, and that the transport links are good. On the other hand, they are also more harsh about living costs, and are less positive about the pace of life.

**Table 6.6: Feelings about the South West as a place to live**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Overall tendency</b>	<b>SW HEIs</b>	<b>Other institutions</b>
It does not feel too far from anywhere*	Agree	3.65	3.26
Pace of life is less hectic	Agree	3.44	3.52
Transport links are good	Disagree	2.91	2.41
Living costs are not high*	Disagree	2.39	2.64
Strong ties to the SW	Agree	3.76	3.65

\* statements and scores have been reversed to allow direct comparison

*Nb:* Scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each statement

Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

Those presently living in the South West (SW Loyals, Returners and Incomers) feel more strongly that the region does not feel too far from anywhere, and this is particularly true of our Incomers group. However, those graduating from health related courses, mathematics/statistics/IT, and Leisure and similar subjects are much less positive about this aspect of the South West.

The pace of life in the South West is generally perceived to be less hectic than in other regions, though whether this is an attractive feature is debatable. For example, Lost SW Students feel more strongly that 'the pace of life is less hectic in the South West', but have left immediately after graduation. Incomers and Passers Through are still in agreement with the statement but less strongly. This suggests that different groups may place different value on the pace of life. Creative arts and media graduates are only just in agreement with the statement, whereas health and nursing graduates feel much more strongly that the pace of life is less hectic.

Overall, respondents disagree that that transport links for the South West are good. However, some groups, notably those taking time out after graduating, and those looking for work are even less positive than others. As these two groups are likely to be on a low income, the cost of transport may be an issue. Lost SW Students are much more negative about transport links, but then they have just moved away from the area, and this may be their first experience of living away from home. In contrast, Passers Through are in agreement with the statement. Incomers are more positive than most other graduates, but on average neither groups agree nor disagree that transport links are good.

In respect of living costs in the South West, overall, there is dissatisfaction with this aspect of life in the region. Women are more concerned than men with living costs. Lost SW Students appear to find living costs less of an issue than other groups of graduates. However, graduates from education courses strongly disagree with the statement that living costs in the South West are not high.

We also asked whether they felt their ties to the South West were strong. Those originally from the South West feel a relatively strong attachment to the region, but there is no real difference between those who studied in the South West compared with those who attended other HEIs. Unsurprisingly, those currently in the South West strongly agree that they have strong ties to the region, although SW Loyals and Returners feel much more strongly than do Incomers. Passers Through have a much weaker attachment to the South West. Subject of study has a noticeable impact on the strength of feeling about links with the South West. Sadly, given that ICT is a priority economic sector for the region, those graduating with degrees in mathematics/statistics/IT say that their ties with the South West are much less strong than graduates from other subjects, though the sample size is relatively small (n=13). Health and nursing graduates, and those with degrees in the humanities or education feel much stronger ties to the South West.

### **Interviewees' views**

The South West was the preferred location for many of our graduates interviewees to live. Where graduates were considering moving or had moved elsewhere it tended to be to the South East. This was often because they were still able to get 'home' for weekends. It should also be noted though that a couple of interviewees living in West of England and Wiltshire viewed the Midlands as part of their labour market. They were living in the South West but using the Midlands as a potential source of work but most of those interviewed seemed to be quite reluctant to move north of the Midlands. In most cases, graduates were very positive about the South West as an area to live and the most frequently cited reasons were:

- countryside, coastal and rural factors *ie* walking, climbing and many outdoor activities
- pubs
- space and healthy living/relaxed pace of life/less stressful
- safety/friendliness of residents/community atmosphere
- attractive towns and cities/cleaner/less built up/less traffic
- proximity to South and SE of England
- relative prosperity – compared to the North
- relatively cheap cost of living – compared to London and the SE
- it being home/close to family and friends.

Many of the comments made covered these themes:

*'Since my family and girlfriend's family live here, and I like the area, I am quite happy to stay here.'* (A SW Loyal, Contemporary History and Media graduate currently based in Exeter)

*'I like being close to my family and friends. I love the area, the coast and countryside. I hope to always stay here.'* (A SW Returner with an Environmental Science degree)

*'I like the quality of life here, there plenty of opportunities to pursue outdoor activities, and now my girlfriend is living here with me then I'm happy to stay.'* (A SW Returner Computer Science graduate)

*'I wouldn't want to live anywhere else in the UK – I'll either live in the South West or abroad.'* (A SW Loyal graduate in Coastal Zone and Marine Environmental Studies)

*'I love Bristol, mainly because of family and friends, but also because I feel the city is becoming very prosperous and its developed a lot in the last few years.'* (A SW Loyal with Qualified Teacher Status)

Although few in number, negative comments about living in the South West tended to centre on:

- lower wages
- too quiet for younger graduates – interestingly the majority of these said they would consider returning when they were older or had themselves become parents
- poor or unreliable transport links – especially within the South West as opposed to between the South West and other areas
- relatively high house prices – particularly in relation to salaries
- poor standard of living/quality of life in some areas due to perceived high levels of unemployment/poverty in some depressed areas – although this was mainly those who had grown up in the SE.

For example, a SW Returner, who is an Economics graduate complained that:

*'I don't drive, so it can be a pain because public transport is not very good and everything is a long way.'*

### **6.5.3 Working in the South West**

As Table 6.7 shows, attitudes towards salaries and graduate opportunities in the region are slightly negative. Opinions about the availability of graduate level employment and the presence of large employers are close to neutral – on average respondents neither agree nor disagree with these two statements.

The opinions of those graduating from South West institutions approximately one year ago are slightly less negative than those of their counterparts who have just completed their degrees.

Similarly, graduates from South West institutions respond less negatively to all four statements, with the exception of salaries, where opinions are virtually identical.

Those taking time out before working are the least negative about the labour market in the South West. In contrast those with little experience of job searching, *ie* those who are unemployed or similar, are the most negative.

Further analysis showed that overall, Passers Through are the only group in our graduate typology who agree that they would recommend the South West as a good place for graduate level employment. Generally, those graduates originally from outside of the South West have a more positive view of this aspect of the labour market, as do graduates from health and nursing, mathematics/statistics/IT and creative arts/media studies courses.

More mature graduates (25 years old or more at the time of our survey) and those from education courses are more positive about the presence of large employers in the region. Lost SW Students are most negative about this statement.

Mature graduates are more negative about salaries in the South West, as are health and nursing, and leisure graduates. Incomers are the most positive about this aspect of employment in the South West, but even so, on average they neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

Opinions about the South West as a place for gaining graduate level employment are also largely negative. This is particularly true of Lost SW Students and the unemployed/other economic activity group.

**Table 6.7: Feelings about the labour market in the South West**

	<b>Overall tendency</b>	<b>SW HEIs</b>	<b>Other institutions</b>
Recommend SW as a good place for graduate level employment	Disagree	2.97	2.63
There are large employers in the region*	Disagree	2.99	2.74
Salaries in the SW are not low*	Disagree	2.78	2.77
There are many graduate opportunities in the region	Disagree	2.73	2.46

\* statements and scores have been reversed to allow direct comparison

*Nb:* Scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, and the base has not been reported as it varies for each statement

Source: IES Graduates Survey, 2002

## What the interviewees said

Graduate interviewees' views of the South West in relation to job opportunities varied somewhat and likely reflect the different prevailing local labour markets that operate in the South West. Bristol was perceived to offer greater opportunities for graduates compared to other towns and cities in the South West, in terms of quality and quantity. For example, one interviewee found it difficult to find suitable opportunities in business services in the Barnstaple area but others said Bristol, for example, had opportunities in abundance. However, this said there seemed to be a general view among a number of graduates that there were not suitable career opportunities, or large employers offering good salaries throughout the South West. Key reasons for not being able to remain or return to the South West area tended to be related to the lack of suitable job opportunities. One graduate summarised the economic situation by saying:

*'It's a beautiful place, but it's culturally lacking. It's pretty dire in terms of graduate level work - the further South West you go, the worse it gets. Some areas are just now creeping out of the '91 recession. Cornwall and North Devon are the worst.'*

Graduates were more likely to believe that there were better opportunities in engineering/manufacturing, tourism and retail, (although again not necessarily at graduate level) than other work areas such as financial and business services.

A SW Loyal graduate in Creative Studies commented that as she lived in a very small community and didn't drive, then her options were very limited. She went on to say she'd have to look for work ...

*'... in retail, because there's very little else here.'*

In addition, those graduates wanting 'policy' careers or wishing to enter graduate training or fast-track schemes had felt it necessary to pursue careers with employers outside the South West, at corporate HQ, typically in London. Some graduates had pursued their early careers near to their university (even some who had moved to a South West university from elsewhere in the UK) demonstrating a desire to remain in the area. In most cases this was either because of family or friends. Likewise, those who left the area often did so to be closer to home. However, some graduates who moved out of the area (usually to London/SE) had done so, not out of any desire to leave the area, but in order to find graduate level opportunities in their chosen field. Generally speaking, this more mobile set, who were less concerned about friends and family, were prepared to move wherever the work was. One graduate commented that:

*'I was willing to move anywhere for a while to get a start.'*

A Lost SW Business Economics graduate explained his reasons for leaving the South West by saying:

*'I would love to live in the South West – it's the nicest place to live and a beautiful place to grow up but there's no work - there isn't the right sort of work for me. It's all seasonal work with holiday-makers. When I was looking for jobs, I never saw anything suitable available in Cornwall or Devon.'*

However, it was interesting to learn of a graduate who had arranged a home-working agreement with their employer in Uxbridge. As a result they were able to move to Devon to live and work but travel to London one day per week. The desire to return to the South West was so strong in order to be with family and friends that the employer agreed a compromise in order to retain the graduate. Some graduates were optimistic that working in the South West might become easier in the future and again Bristol was reported by a number as being an area 'on the up'. Several respondents also commented that in the last few years there had been an increase in opportunities in the area, the city centre had improved and it had a general feel of a more prosperous city.

A Lost SW Law graduate said:

*'I think opportunities for graduate jobs will get better ... DEFRA is supposed to be expanding and the MET office relocating.'*

## 6.6 Key points

Evidence from the Labour Force Survey, our survey of graduates and interviews of graduates shows that:

- The South West is a net importer of graduate skills and knowledge, but only just. More graduates live in the South West than work in the region. Around 15 per cent of workers in the South West have a degree, below the UK average.
- The South West has a relatively mature graduate population. For example, no other region has a lower proportion of its graduate residents who are of working age and a large proportion of graduate residents in the region are in early retirement.
- Workers in the South West are also older than the average, and appear to be more likely to have been a mature graduate, or to have graduated more than 20 years ago. This profile poses succession planning issues for the region in the medium to long term.
- There are no convenient pools of unemployed graduates that the South West could call upon. Graduate unemployment in the South West and neighbouring regions is low.
- Graduate self-employment in the South West is not special, except in its relative size. Although a relatively high

proportion of graduates in the South West are self-employed, they have the same characteristics as other self-employed people in terms of gender balance, age, and length of service.

- Around 100,000 graduates in the South West work in the priority economic sectors. Some sectors, *eg* creative industries, are more 'graduate rich' than others, and the region's Advanced Engineering and Marine industries are the largest in the UK. However, the graduate survey showed that around half of recent graduates working in these sectors do not expect to remain in the South West beyond the short term.
- Graduates are not evenly spread across the sub-regions, but are concentrated in the same, largely urban, locations as the South West's universities and colleges.
- Some sub-regions utilise their graduate resource more intensively than others, and there is also some evidence of pay 'hot-spots' among the sub-regions.
- Overall, the quality of graduate employment in the region is comparable in most respects to that in other regions. Most graduates in the region have permanent contracts for higher level jobs, and around half have received work related training and development in the last three months.
- Earnings in the South West are relatively low, typically £100 a week behind those on offer in London. Graduates in the South West earn around 91 per cent of the UK average.
- The quality of opportunities for recent graduates are also roughly in line with those on offer in other regions, except in terms of pay. Earnings for recent graduates in the South West are on a par with many other regions, but are still £100 a week behind those in London. Recent graduates have high expectations of salary growth.
- However, salary progression may be faster in the South West than in London or the South East, despite starting salaries being lower.
- Career progression in the South West may also be faster than in many other regions. Again, recent graduates have high expectations of their career progress.
- One year after graduating, most agree that their career plans are on track, and that their current activity forms part of their career plan, though they have not found it easy to find a job which matches their skills and abilities.
- There is a great deal of difference between the attitudes of those off to a good start in their careers, when compared to people caught in temporary contracts in non-graduate type work.
- The majority would be prepared to relocate to improve their career prospects – even SW Loyals. Younger graduates and

men are the most mobile, as are people who have a history of moving to study or work.

- Graduates' opinions about living in the South West do not shift greatly after finishing their degrees, except that they find the cost of living in the South West even more unsatisfactory.
- Experience of the South West raises its value in graduates' eyes. Few graduates feel that South West is too far from anywhere, and South West HEI graduates are more positive still, as are those currently living in the region.
- The relaxed pace of life in the region is a mixed blessing. Different types of graduate place different value on the pace of life – Lost SW students agree that the pace of life is less stressed or hectic yet leave the area at the first opportunity.
- Transport links are thought to be unsatisfactory.
- People originally from the South West feel that they have strong ties to the region, though studying in the region does not seem to engender such a strong attachment.
- The region offers a good quality of life, but the availability of appropriate job opportunities for graduates in the region is a major issue. Many report that their preference is to stay in the South West, but that career opportunities, large employers and good salaries are hard to find.

# 7. Conclusions

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The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing graduate retention and employment in the South West. To do so, we have followed the route to and through higher education into the labour market. At each stage in the process we have examined the key features of the South West experience and have therefore looked at:

- applicants to higher education from the South West and those who accept places at South West HEIs
- students in their final year at South West HEIs and their labour market and other intentions on graduation
- graduates' immediate experience of trying to enter the labour market
- the destinations of South West graduates, again focusing on their employment experience within the first year of leaving higher education
- graduates in the South West labour market, of what ever age and origin.

Underpinning the study has been a framework which distinguishes between types of graduates by where they come from, where they study and where they work, with the intention of examining the factors that influence their key decisions. Thus at each point we have sought to understand what drives the choices they make, the paths and routes they take and the transitions they go through.

In this final chapter we briefly review the grid at the centre of the study to draw out the key characteristics of the main groups. We then highlight what we consider to be the key messages to emerge from the study for the South West graduate labour market and finish by discussing some of the implications for policy development.

## 7.1 Populating the grid

Our grid (see Table 7.1) plots the outcomes of the choices made by people from the South West or elsewhere at the key transition points of:

**Table 7.1: Graduate flows to and from the South West**

<b>Types of graduate</b>	<b>Where from?</b>	<b>Where studied?</b>	<b>Where job?</b>
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere
Lost SW students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW
Missed opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere

*Source: IES 2002*

- where to study, and
- where to take employment.

There are a number of data sources which can help us quantify and characterise various cells or columns in the grid. However we have found only one source which covers the entire framework: by combining HESA's Individual Student Record with the First Destinations Survey. In Chapter 5 we calculated the relative sizes of each group.

It is important to realise that this picture is taken approximately six months after graduation – and we know that graduates' employment patterns change significantly thereafter. It is also important to note that the data are taken from a survey and therefore only cover a sample (albeit a large one) of graduate destinations. In Table 7.2, we have grossed up the data to take account of this to produce rough estimates of the actual numbers of people in each group. While other data sources will produce other numbers, the general orders of magnitude are the same from all the sources available to us and we are confident that the overall picture is broadly accurate.

The numbers are presented in Table 7.2, and are based on known destinations.

The key points here are that:

- fourteen per cent of all new graduates finding employment have some connection with the South West, whether that is home, study or work
- the size of the Missed Opportunities group dwarves that of the groups with some relationship to the South West. The relative sizes of the remaining groups are given in Table 7.3
- most people from the South West who go to HE go elsewhere. Three in every five people from the South West who enter

**Table 7.2: Flows from and through the SW (those in work at FDS only 1999/2000)**

	<b>Where from?</b>	<b>Where studied?</b>	<b>Where job?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
SW Loyals	SW	SW	SW	5,300	2
Lost SW Graduates	SW	SW	Elsewhere	1,300	1
Lost SW Students	SW	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	4,100	3
Returners	SW	Elsewhere	SW	3,900	2
Incomers	Elsewhere	SW	SW	2,100	1
Passers Through	Elsewhere	SW	Elsewhere	6,850	4
Poached Graduates	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	SW	2,700	1
Missed Opportunities	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	Elsewhere	170,000	86

Source: IES estimates based on HESA 2002, Linked Student & FDS

higher education choose to leave the region to study, most do not return

- most people in higher education in the South West come from elsewhere - but fewer go the other way. The region is a net exporter of students
- most graduates from higher education in the South West work outside the region. Just over half the graduates from higher education in the South West find their first job outside the region and the proportion rises over time. The South West is a net exporter of graduates, although there is a great variation between the different groups in their propensity to take work in the South West
- most graduates working in the South West soon after studying, attended higher education institutions in the South West
- most graduates working in South West come from the South West originally. South West employers must therefore rely heavily on local provision to meet their needs.

**Table 7.3: Degree holders with a relationship with the SW by type**

<b>Type</b>	<b>%</b>
SW Loyals	15
Lost SW Graduates	4
Lost SW Students	22
Returners	15
Incomers	8
Passers Through	26
Poached Graduates	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: IES/HESA 2002, Linked Student & FDS

### **7.1.1 What do the different types of graduate look like?**

The main characteristics of each group of graduate, in terms of their personal and study characteristics are set out below.

#### **Missed opportunities**

As this group is so large (some 170,000 strong – 86 per cent of all graduates), the profile of its graduates is virtually identical to that of all graduates finding employment. The best comparator group for Missed Opportunities is all graduates in employment with a link to the South West.

The majority of Missed Opportunities are female (58 per cent, compared with 55 per cent of employed graduates with some association with the South West). A much higher proportion of Missed Opportunities are from the black and minority ethnic groups. Eighty three per cent of Missed Opportunities are white, compared to 89 per cent of graduates with a link to the South West. Missed Opportunities are also slightly older – one in four are over 25, compared with one in five. However, in subject of study, the two groups are very similar.

#### **SW Loyals**

SW Loyals are the bedrock of the South West graduate labour market, representing the biggest single source of supply – we estimate this group includes over 5,000 people every year. The typical SW Loyal is female, white and older than most other students. Sixty two per cent of SW Loyals are female, compared to 55 per cent of all graduates in employment with a connection with the South West. Eighty-nine per cent are white and only two per cent list themselves as being of black or minority ethnic origin. Thirty per cent of SW Loyals are over 30, compared to ten per cent among all graduates with a link to the South West. These students have a strong vocational orientation – favoured subjects are the subjects allied to medicine and education. In total, one-third of SW Loyals have degrees in one of these two subjects and this is reflected in their employment preference for health and teaching and other public service jobs. They are strongly attracted to life in the region – which they consider their ‘home’ – although some may feel trapped.

#### **Lost SW Graduates**

This is a relatively small group, at around 1,300 people, comprising equal numbers of men and women in this group, which is unusual given that women make up a slight majority in higher education generally. Lost SW Graduates are typical in terms of their ethnicity, which is to say that they are mainly white.

Though not as mature as SW Loyals, a relatively large proportion of Lost SW Graduates are over the age of 25 – 27 per cent compared to 20 per cent of all graduates with a link with the South West. They are also like SW Loyals in that one third studied one of two vocational subjects, though among Lost SW Graduates, business and administrative studies and education are the most common subjects. Lost SW Graduates are the most likely to look for secure and challenging work after graduation. Some see themselves as ‘high fliers’ and therefore feel the region’s labour market (or indeed the local environment) does not suit them. They tend to be lured towards London and the South East and the higher salaries they think they will command there.

### **Lost SW Students**

The Lost SW Students is a large group – we estimate that there are over 6,000 in this group in a typical year. Fifty three per cent are female, the same proportion as in the UK as a whole, but lower than among all employed graduates with a link to the South West. Four per cent studied medicine, and nine per cent languages, both relatively high proportions. However, only eight per cent read either business and administration or education, compared with 11 per cent of graduates with a link with the South West for both subjects. This group also contains more white people, relatively speaking, than is the case among all with a link with the South West.

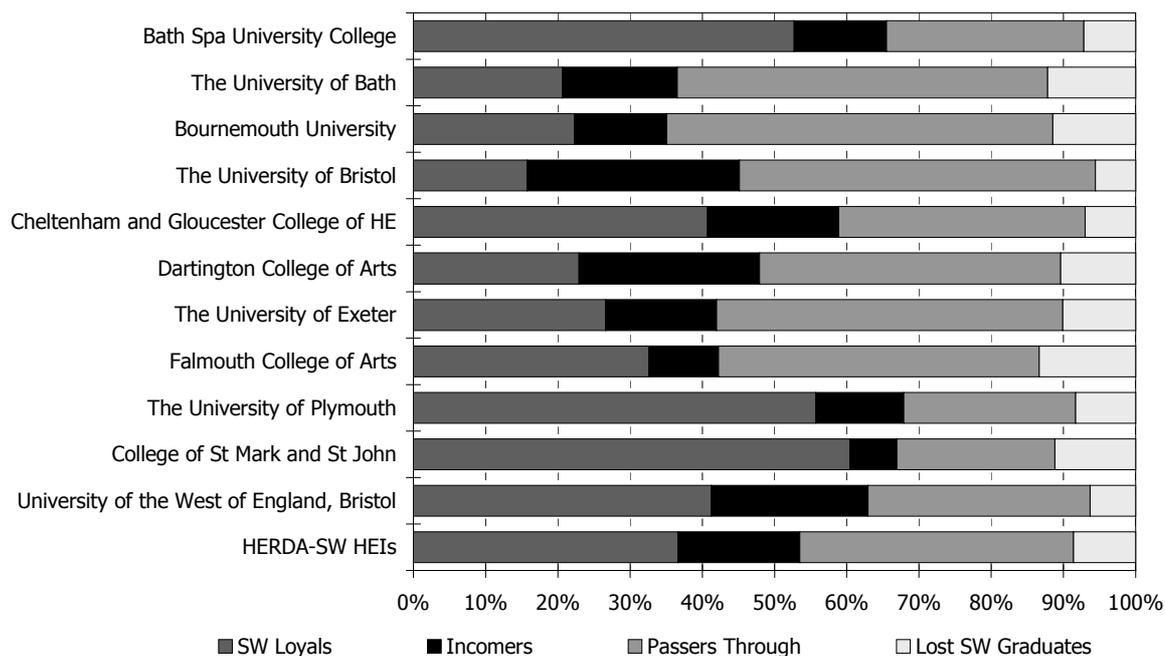
### **Returners**

This group, of around 4,000 people, is best described as more or less average. Fifty-seven per cent are female, 83 per cent are aged 21-25, the most conventional age for leaving university, and 92 per cent are white. Their subject choice is also typical of graduates with a link to the South West. However, Returners are the group least likely to obtain a managerial, professional or associate professional job following graduation, and often have very short term contracts.

### **Incomers**

This group is just over 2,000 strong and is much younger than the average – 87 per cent are under the age of 25, however, a relatively low proportion of Incomers are female, just 52 per cent. The ethnic profile of this group is difficult to determine as one in ten are recorded as ‘ethnicity unknown’. At five per cent, Incomers are the group most likely to have studied Law, but relatively few followed education degrees. They are the least critical of all about employment prospects in the South West. They are particularly attracted by the quality of life on offer which overcomes any desire to return home.

**Figure 7.1: Profile of graduates from the HERDA-SW**



Source: IES, 2002

### Passers Through

The Passers Through are the largest group of people in our typology with some sort of relationship with the South West, covering almost 7,000 graduates. It is also the youngest group. Nine out of ten are under the age of 25, and only three per cent are over 30. Like Incomers, only 52 per cent are female, but this group has a relatively high proportion of black and minority ethnic graduates. Four per cent record a non-white ethnicity, the majority of whom are of Asian origin. Very few took medicine or subjects allied to medicine. Instead, business and administration courses were quite popular in this group, accounting for 16 per cent of graduates. They generally enjoyed their time studying in the South West but return home once they have graduated. They could be persuaded to stay if there are more career opportunities.

### Poached Graduates

This group, covering around 2,700 people every year, is close to average in terms of age, but has a low proportion of women (just 51 per cent) and a high proportion of black and minority ethnic graduates at five per cent. Four per cent of Poached Graduates are of Asian origin, and 85 per cent are White. Four per cent took medicine degrees, which is a relatively high proportion. Eleven per cent studied Engineering and technology compared with six per cent amongst all graduates in employment who have a link to the South West. Business and administration graduates are under-represented in this group at just six per cent of the total.

The profile of the graduates from the member institutions of HERDA-SW are set out in Figure 7.1.

## 7.2 Main messages

It is difficult to distil the vast array of information analysed by this study into a series of simple bullet points, without omitting important points of interest to particular groups. However, with that caveat in mind, the overall messages that emerge from the study are summarised below:

- **The South West is:**
  - **a net exporter of students.** Most people from the South West who enter higher education study outside the region
  - **a net exporter of graduates.** Most students who study in the South West end up working outside the region, particularly as time passes
  - **a nice place to study.** South West students are generally very satisfied with their experience of higher education
  - **a nice place to live.** Most students from the South West or who go there to study think it is a nice place to live. The overall quality of life is thought to be high, but some aspects of life, such as transport links, are thought to be poor
  - **perceived to be not a good place to work.** Students in the South West feel that the job opportunities, outside areas such as the public service sector, and locations nearer the South East and the Midlands, are limited. While some find satisfactory employment in the South West, most either leave straight after graduation or hang around for a while in temporary employment, before heading off for the brighter prospects and better 'opportunities' in London and elsewhere. Lost SW Graduates, who come from and studied in the South West but work elsewhere have better quality jobs than those SW students who stay in the region. Although some of the negative views of the South West are misplaced, for instance the quality of graduate jobs is around the regional average, real graduate earnings – taking in to account the cost of living - do appear to be relatively low.
- **Demand for graduates is important.** The movement of graduates out of the region and the reasons they give for going suggest that it is the lack of adequate job opportunities (or at least the perceived lack) which is driving many away. Many would prefer to stay, but feel they have to go for career reasons. There is more research that could be done to identify the true extent of employer demand for graduates.

- **Domestic students are the key source of supply.** The group we call SW Loyals forms the largest group of SW graduates working in the region. They are committed to stay for various reasons and form the core supply. However ...
- **... key employers look outside.** Most employers in the region's priority sectors prefer to import graduates from outside the region. This may be partly because SW Loyals study subjects that are more suited to other occupations and sectors. While this may suit sections of the overall demand for graduates, *eg* from public services, for other employers the domestic supply is inadequate.
- **Home is where the heart is.** While a number of people from the South West go elsewhere to study, as in most regions, many return. Our group of graduate Returners outnumber our Incomers by two to one. While many who come to study from outside the region stay for a while, they tend to drift away – back home or to better job prospects elsewhere. Many Returners seem particularly keen to come back, taking relatively low quality jobs so to do.
- **It's worst in the West.** There are fewer graduate opportunities the further West you travel in the region. In the far South West, *ie* Cornwall and Devon, opportunities tend to be for older and more local graduates, whereas in the near South West, *eg* the area around Bristol, appears to offer more higher level job opportunities. There are fewer graduates in the West of the region and a lower proportion of those that do live there are in employment than in other parts of the South West, reflecting the number of graduates who move West to retire.
- **Students have a fairly realistic view of the labour market.** Students expectations of their employment and salary prospects seem reasonably grounded in reality, although they may not be aware of the full range of job opportunities available. Many take a medium-term view of their career prospects and would be happy to work in smaller and medium sized businesses – as long as the job prospects looked interesting.

## 7.3 Policy implications

The focus of this study has been on the supply of graduates in the South West region, particularly through the local higher education infrastructure. Why does this matter? Public policy is increasingly focused on the relationship between the availability of high level skills in the labour market (at least in part manifested in the number of graduates) and economic and social prosperity. The more graduates there are in the labour market, the more scope there is for organisations of all kinds, public and private, to raise their skill levels and thereby improve the quality and efficiency of the services they offer and the products they make.

The study has shown that the South West region does not make the use it could of its domestic graduate resource. While the overall proportion of graduates living in the region is similar to other comparable regions, many are retirees or looking to 'downshift' and enjoy the local quality of life. While this may benefit the regional economy and community in some ways, the region is less attractive to 'high fliers', looking to build careers and/or work in more vibrant sectors of the economy. There is a classic 'chicken and egg' argument here: which comes first – the jobs to attract 'high flying' graduates, or the graduates to attract 'high altitude' employers? There is a further dilemma too: should higher education institutions focus on demand from potential students for courses or on employers for potential graduates?

While we cannot fully answer either question, in this final section we do offer some thoughts, based on the evidence generated by the study, as to what actions could be taken to increase the supply of graduates to the region. The study has shown that not all students are the same and that different policies may appeal to different groups. Returning to the framework at the heart of our study there are essentially two strategic options:

- The first involves reducing the number of students or graduates who leave the South West either to take a degree elsewhere (and not return later) or once they have completed their studies at a South West HEI – we characterise this policy option as '**plugging the leaks**'.
- The second option involves **increasing the flow** into the South West labour market either by raising the number South West domiciled students who stay in the region (our South West Loyals) or increasing the number who leave the region to study to come back (Returners).

It is important to bear in mind however that these groups themselves are neither homogenous (and contain a lot of very different people with different values and aspirations) nor stable (the study also found that graduates are increasingly mobile in their early years and can therefore effectively switch groups a number of times).

In addition there are a range of other actions which could be taken to improve graduate recruitment and retention.

### **7.3.1 Plugging the leaks**

There are three main sources of leakage:

- Lost SW Students – who leave the region to study
- Lost SW Graduates – who leave the region to work
- Passers Through – who stay in the region only to study and then leave.

## **Turning Lost SW Students**

Our study found that students have a tendency to study outside, but not very far outside, the region – careful marketing to this group and the provision of the right courses could reverse this tendency. Subjects such as medicine and languages are popular among students from the South West who study elsewhere. These might be areas where regional provision could increase. If more courses are provided and filled then the South West could become a net importer rather than an exporter of students.

## **Retaining Lost SW Graduates**

These potential high fliers tend to leave the region for better prospects in London and elsewhere. However the real earnings of graduates, although relatively low in the South West, are even lower in London (due to the cost of living), and the quality of jobs in the South West is relatively good. Certainly some areas of the region, *eg* around Bristol, are felt to be positively vibrant both in social and labour market terms. Perhaps there are some marketing messages here for the region – particularly to market the jobs that are available in the priority sectors to domestic students (and to make them more attractive *eg* in terms of the development and career opportunities available). The region is losing a key domestic resource in this group. If the aim is to retain key graduates then perhaps this is the group which needs the most attention.

## **Retaining Passers Through**

Similarly there are also marketing messages for students who come to the region to study and could be attracted to stay if they realise the full extent of the job opportunities available in the region, *ie* turning Passers Through to Incomers. Offering work placements (of various kinds from sandwich courses to work experience placements) may be one way for employers to engage with this and other groups, to demonstrate the type of jobs available and ease their way into the South West labour market. (see section 7.3.3).

## **7.3.2 Increasing the flow**

### **Increase the core supply**

One of the clear messages from the study is the importance of domestic students to the graduate supply in the South West. We found that South West HEIs had a below average proportion of applications from within the region, compared with other parts of the country. The most important factor for students from the South West who study in the South West in choosing a university or college is that it offers the subjects they want to study – South

West students are no different to any other in this regard. However they are significantly more interested in the location of the university or college and its distance from home than students from or studying elsewhere. Location is therefore a key selling point for South West universities looking to increase the number of domestic students. Even those students who chose to go outside the region tend not to go too far, *eg* Southampton, Cardiff, Oxford, Birmingham, Swansea and Portsmouth. It may therefore be relatively easy to persuade them to stay within the region, especially if the courses in which they are most interested are available. A further option here would be to increase the provision of the courses which would meet domestic employer demand for graduates (rather than initial student demand). Perhaps HEIs need support both to identify the courses and options employers require and to cover the risks of setting them up.

Those currently choosing to study in the region tend to be older than average. Older students place a higher priority on flexible provision – *eg* to accommodate their own caring responsibilities *etc.* To entice older people into courses relevant to the priority sectors (and as such an important element of domestic demand) the nature of the provision may need to be adapted to make it more attractive to older students.

### **Increase the flow back**

Many students who study outside the region seem keen to return home to work and the Returners often take low quality jobs to regain a foothold in the South West labour market – and sometimes find themselves stuck on a low trajectory career path. This suggests that they would benefit from receiving better support. Returners could be identified from local education authority contacts and could be offered information on South West graduate job opportunities and careers advice provided by South West HEIs. This group could be an important source of supply especially to the priority sectors.

### **7.3.3 Other actions**

Underlying some of these implications are other, more general, messages for policy-makers including:

- **Promote work placements** – our study confirms previous research that demonstrates the value of work experience placements – of various kinds – in enabling graduates to find a more secure and successful route into the labour market. Experience of appropriate work (whether through work experience, work placements or sandwich-type courses): helps them with their career choices (in both a positive and negative way); increases their understanding of the workplace and readiness for work; and, improves their connections and networks with recruiters. As a result, their employability is

enhanced. The more that local employers and HEIs offer work experience opportunities, the greater the employment prospects of prospective graduates, particularly within the region.

- **Raise the profile of local employment opportunities** – particularly those available in smaller and medium-sized workplaces. It is often thought that graduates gravitate towards larger employers and formal graduate entry schemes. However our study has shown that many students have a very realistic view of the labour market and the dominance of smaller employers and would be happy to join them if the appropriate opportunities arose. This implies greater work by both employers and careers services to identify, track and publicise the available jobs and to emphasise the value of the experience of working in a smaller workplace and the opportunities available to develop skills across a range of roles. There is also much work to be done with smaller employers, many of whom would not think of employing a graduate, to demonstrate the value they can bring to a business.
- **Work with local employers to promote regional opportunities** – many of the perceptions that young people from the South West have of their regional labour market are formed at an early age. There is scope for local employers, again particularly from priority sectors, to work with schools and colleges to promote the opportunities they have available.
- **Improve the information base** – institutions could do more to help themselves by improving their own information base and building up expertise within the institution in analysing the data they already hold and linking between and across departments. There also may be more scope for closer co-operation between similar institutions, *ie* those dealing in similar markets.
- **Improve understanding of local employer demand** – this study has focussed mainly on the supply of graduates to the region. There is more that could be done to understand what employers want from the graduate supply, what would make them employ more graduates, particularly those from South West HEIs. Why do priority sectors look outside the South West for their graduate supply? Does it matter that they do? With this additional information a more comprehensive policy could be developed to improve graduation recruitment and retention in the South West.

## Appendix 1: Glossary

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CSU – Higher Education Careers Service Unit

CVCP – Committee of, Vice Chancellors and Principals, now UUK

FDS – First Destinations Survey, conducted by HESA

The Graduates survey - the IES follow up survey of UCAS Applicants

HE – Higher Education

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HERDA-SW – Higher Education Regional Development Association, South West

HESA – Higher Education Statistics Agency

HND – Higher National Diploma

IES – Institute for Employment Studies

ICT – Information and Communication Technologies

ILO – International Labour Organization

ISR – Individual Student Record, from HESA

The Leavers' survey – the IES survey of final year students in HERDA-SW institutions

LFS – Labour Force Survey, conducted by ONS

NES – New Earnings Survey, conducted by ONS

New Graduates – in general we use this term for those surveyed six months after graduation through the First Destinations Survey.

ONS – Office for National Statistics

PGCE – Post Graduate Certificate in Education

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

Recent graduates – we use this term for graduates in the Labour Force Survey who have finished their degrees in the last four years

SIC – Standard Industrial Classification

SOC – Standard Occupational Classification

SWRDA – South West Regional Development Agency

UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

UUK – Universities UK

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## Appendix 3: Secondary Data on the SW

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### A3.1 Secondary data sources

#### A3.1.1 CSU

Established in 1972, CSU, the Higher Education Careers Services Unit publish the 'Prospects' series of guides to graduate careers and postgraduate study in the UK.

The CSU data analysed in this report are drawn from advertisements in the publication Prospects Today, a vacancy magazine aimed at graduates. This provides a relatively large sample of employers of graduates in the UK, offering around 5,000 vacancies a year, though this is still a relatively small proportion of the full range of graduate opportunities in the UK. Around 38 per cent of advertisements carry salary information. This data source offers the opportunity to analyse salaries and vacancies by region, though it does not include jobs requiring extra qualifications, *eg* law, medicine and education. The survey is also biased towards larger and national recruiters, offering work specifically targeted at new graduates. This is thought to inflate estimates of the level of base salaries on offer to new graduates.

#### A3.1.2 HESA

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) was set up in 1993 and is the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education in the UK.

HESA collects five main data sets, of which the Student Record and First Destinations Survey are useful to our purpose. Data are collected by all publicly funded HEIs in the UK and collated by HESA.

The Student Record collects information from HEIs about the number and characteristics of active students registered at the university or college for a full or part time higher education course. As such it is a census, rather than a survey. In this report we have used the Student Record from July 2001.

The First Destination Survey is carried out each Autumn by HEIs, usually the careers service. A questionnaire is sent to all those from full time courses who graduated in the previous year. The postal survey has a high response rate, typically 75 per cent or higher. The questionnaire asks graduates about their economic activity approximately six months after graduating, typically on the first working day of January. Throughout this report we have used the 1999/2000 first destinations data.

The HESA data do not cover all of the HERDA-SW institutions. The following institutions are included in the data sets.

- Bath Spa University College
- The University of Bath
- Bournemouth University
- The University of Bristol
- Dartington College of Arts
- The University of Exeter
- Falmouth College of Arts
- University of Gloucestershire
- The University of Plymouth
- College of St Mark and St John
- University of the West of England, Bristol.

Due to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, HESA data must be presented in a rounded form in order to preserve the confidentiality of individual students and graduates. Throughout this report, statistics drawn from HESA data have been rounded to the nearest ten, and as a consequence the sum of numbers in each row or column rarely match the total shown precisely.

### **A3.1.3 LFS**

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is carried out quarterly by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Each quarter, approximately 65,000 households are contacted for information on household members' personal circumstances, qualifications and extensive information about their work including earnings.

The majority of the sampled addresses are drawn from the Postcode Address File (PAF), which gives a list of addresses around the country including private residences, students' halls of residence and NHS communal accommodation. Around 80 per cent of households chosen from the PAF agree to participate in the survey. Households are interviewed for five consecutive quarters. Around 95 per cent of those interviewed for the first time participate in the next four quarters. First interviews are usually

conducted face-to-face using computer assisted personal interviewing systems. Following interviews are usually conducted over the telephone.

In every quarter there are equal sized groups of people giving their first interview, their second interview, *etc.* When a household gives its fifth and final interview, they drop out of the survey to be replaced by a new set of households giving their first interview.

The data resulting from each quarter's interviews are weighted to counteract any bias in the profile of people who have been interviewed (younger, urban people are harder to catch to interview) and grossed up to reflect the size of the full UK population.

It is important to remember that the figures produced from the Labour Force Survey are estimates, rather than a count. This is because the survey is a sample, and not a measure of everybody in the UK. ONS states that:

*'Survey estimates are relatively more accurate for larger samples or groups than for smaller samples. This means that estimates about the whole country are more reliable than those for regional or sub-regional areas. For example, we know that nine times out of ten, the real level of employment in Great Britain is within approximately 128 thousand (0.5 per cent) of the LFS estimate. And we know that 19 times out of 20 the real level of employment is within 153 thousand (0.6 per cent) of the LFS estimate. But the corresponding figures for the South West are 38 thousand (1.6 per cent) and 45 thousand (1.9 per cent), respectively. Generally, the sampling variability around regional estimates is, proportionately, around three times that for national estimates.'*

Jones A and Smith, 2001, p 12. However, the survey remains the largest survey of households in the UK which can give us information about employment in the South West. The analysis in this report uses the Winter Quarter for 2001, unless stated otherwise.

#### **A3.1.4 Right choice**

In 1997/1998 IES undertook a large scale research study on student choice for a consortium of CVCP (now UUK), HEFCE, UCAS and 15 individual HEIs.

The main sample was based on applicants to each of the 15 participating institutions, which included Bath Spa University College. Participating institutions included six pre-1992 universities, six post-1992 universities and three colleges of higher education. There was also a 'top up' sample of 5,015 applicants from a selection of other universities and colleges, to ensure that the total sample was representative of the population as a whole, both geographically and by type of institution.

Around 2,000 applicants to each institution were chosen. As applicants may apply to six different institutions, the institution for which they were sampled was not necessarily their first choice institution, nor the one they subsequently entered.

The 16 different samples were aggregated to form the UK sample. The survey took the form of a postal questionnaire, administered by UCAS, of UK applicants to full time courses at UK HEIs for entry in 1998. The sample design was based on a stratified random sampling method, using subject and type of offer as main stratifications. Within these stratifications, the sample was drawn at random by UCAS from their database of degree and HND applicants who had made an application through UCAS by 30 June 1998.

In total, 31,230 applicants were selected for survey for the 15 participating HEIs. Including the top up sample, 36,245 applicants were surveyed.

Questionnaires were sent out by UCAS in late August. The survey closed in late October. Two reminders were issued to non-respondents. A prize draw for a £1,000 computer was offered to help boost the response rate. In total, IES received 22,001 completed questionnaires, a 61 per cent response rate, after allowing for non-completed questionnaires. Responses between institutions ranged from 44 to 71 per cent.

When the personal characteristics of the achieved sample were compared to those of the UCAS applicant population, they were found to be broadly similar in most respects. There was a slight bias by age and gender, though the age and sex biases were not adjusted.

Full details of the Right Choice methodology are found in Connor *et al.* (1999).

### **A3.1.5 UCAS**

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service administer applications to full time, undergraduate courses on behalf of the majority (332 in 2001) of the UK's HEIs. In addition to the choices made by applicants, a selection of data about applicants' personal characteristics (including home region, sex, age group, *etc.*) are available.

The majority of the data used in this report relates to UK domiciled applicants who applied during the 2000/2001 application cycle, most of whom will have entered HE in the autumn of 2001.

Not all applicants to HE use the UCAS applications service. A small number of accepted applicants will have deferred entry or

changed their mind about attending university/college. Hence the numbers of accepted applicants is not an accurate count of the number of university entrants in a year.

UCAS, mindful of the value of their data base and protective of the confidentiality of both their clients (the universities and colleges) and applicants, restrict access to their data. The majority of the analyses in this report are taken from a sub-set of the UCAS data. These data are restricted to either people applying from the South West, or those making an application to an institution in the region. As a consequence, a full inter-regional breakdown of applications and acceptance is not possible. Similarly, UCAS declined to provide data which would allow analysis by institution.

Information from the bespoke data sets have been supplemented by analysis of the publicly available data sets.

## **A3.2 Additional data tables**

**Table A3.1: Applications by region of domicile and region of institution**

Region of domicile	Region of institution													
	EM	E	GL	M	NE	NW	NI	Sc	SE	SW	W	WM	Y&H	UK
East Midlands (EM)	30,590	4,167	7,843	2,863	4,704	9,911	63	2,001	6,957	<b>6,243</b>	2,559	13,128	22,299	113,328
Eastern (E)	18,246	20,687	25,180	2,361	4,726	8,283	120	2,980	21,019	<b>12,908</b>	3,155	11,917	15,146	146,728
Greater London (GL)	14,322	13,737	147,404	2,447	4,497	10,149	229	4,869	32,238	<b>16,335</b>	3,528	13,787	13,642	277,184
Merseyside (M)	2,066	411	1,282	11,814	1,703	9,523	29	896	938	<b>985</b>	928	1,816	5,706	38,097
North East (NE)	3,716	923	2,064	2,043	26,875	5,571	50	3,261	1,422	<b>1,120</b>	537	2,119	10,849	60,550
North West (NW)	10,937	2,192	6,333	11,234	8,010	57,705	134	4,941	4,874	<b>5,071</b>	3,791	9,893	30,345	155,460
Northern Ireland (NI)	1,359	766	1,834	3,395	2,178	3,784	46,155	12,983	1,238	<b>979</b>	852	1,268	2,073	78,864
Scotland (Sc)	1,030	698	2,227	737	2,953	2,197	216	113,445	1,301	<b>1,306</b>	596	935	2,135	129,776
South East (SE)	20,710	10,806	42,107	3,207	6,516	10,562	188	5,208	64,971	<b>34,105</b>	9,102	17,558	17,421	242,461
<b>South West (SW)</b>	<b>9,408</b>	<b>4,426</b>	<b>14,158</b>	<b>1,937</b>	<b>2,888</b>	<b>6,120</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>2,545</b>	<b>24,901</b>	<b>43,413</b>	<b>12,478</b>	<b>10,720</b>	<b>8,472</b>	<b>141,549</b>
Wales (W)	4,317	1,403	4,433	2,877	1,205	5,996	55	998	5,780	<b>10,133</b>	30,412	5,925	5,046	78,580
West Midlands (WM)	19,438	3,404	9,212	4,230	3,438	12,484	104	2,255	9,415	<b>11,651</b>	7,522	50,991	16,011	150,155
Yorks & Humberside (Y&H)	13,011	2,510	5,098	4,756	10,689	16,711	82	3,664	4,092	<b>3,862</b>	2,069	7,572	55,030	129,146
<i>Grand Total (UK)</i>	<i>149,150</i>	<i>66,130</i>	<i>269,175</i>	<i>53,901</i>	<i>80,382</i>	<i>158,996</i>	<i>47,508</i>	<i>160,046</i>	<i>179,146</i>	<b><i>148,111</i></b>	<i>77,529</i>	<i>147,629</i>	<i>204,175</i>	<i>1,741,878</i>

Source: IES/UCAS 2002

**Table A3.2: Subject of application for South West domiciled applicants**

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	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Creative arts	3,669	14
Social studies	2,941	11
Business and administrative studies	2,771	10
Subjects allied to medicine	2,055	8
Mathematical sciences and informatics	2,045	8
Biological sciences	1,419	5
Physical sciences	1,322	5
Engineering and technology	1,291	5
Languages and related disciplines	1,416	5
Education	1,357	5
Humanities	1,007	4
Mass communications and documentation	798	3
Combined arts	679	3
Science combined with social studies or arts	897	3
Social studies combined with arts	791	3
Medicine/Dentistry	455	2
Agriculture and related subjects	580	2
Architecture, building and planning	430	2
Combined sciences	582	2
Combined social studies	214	1
Other general and combined studies	211	1
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>26,930</i>	<i>100</i>

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Source: IES/UCAS 2002

**Table A3.3: Applications and acceptances, by region, of South West domiciled potential students**

	<b>Applications</b>		<b>Acceptances</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
South West	43,413	31	11,613	43
East Midlands	9,408	7	1,300	5
Eastern	4,426	3	738	3
Greater London	14,158	10	2,077	8
Merseyside	1,937	1	242	1
North East	2,888	2	413	2
North West	6,120	4	746	3
Northern Ireland	83	0	7	0
Scotland	2,545	2	333	1
South East	24,901	18	4,263	16
Wales	12,478	9	2,640	10
West Midlands	10,720	8	1,507	6
Yorks & The Humber	8,472	6	1,051	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>141,549</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>26,930</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: IES/UCAS 2002

**Table A3.4: Applications received by South Western HEIs by applicant's region of domicile**

<b>Domicile</b>	<b>Applications</b>		<b>Applicants</b>		<b>Applications per person</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	
South West	29	43,413	22,704	23	1.9
East Midlands	4	6,243	4,976	5	1.3
Eastern	9	12,908	9,914	10	1.3
Greater London	11	16,335	12,805	13	1.3
Merseyside	1	985	858	1	1.1
North East	1	1,120	978	1	1.1
North West	3	5,071	4,243	4	1.2
Northern Ireland	1	979	805	1	1.2
Scotland	1	1,306	1,064	1	1.2
South East	23	34,105	23,338	23	1.5
Wales	7	10,133	6,655	7	1.5
West Midlands	8	11,651	8,779	9	1.3
Yorks & The Humber	3	3,862	3,202	3	1.2
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>148,111</i>	<i>100,321</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>1.5</i>

Source: IES/UCAS 2002

**Table A3.5: Region of domicile for full time students in South Western HEIs**

	<b>Bath Spa University College</b>	<b>The University of Bath</b>	<b>Bournemouth University</b>	<b>The University of Bristol</b>	<b>Dartington College of Arts</b>	<b>The University of Exeter</b>	<b>Falmouth College of Arts</b>	<b>University of Gloucestershire</b>	<b>The University of Plymouth</b>	<b>College of St Mark and St John</b>	<b>University of the West of England, Bristol</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Cornwall	3	3	1	2	4	6	25	4	9	18	2	5
Devon	5	5	3	3	24	9	6	6	26	40	5	10
Dorset	6	3	17	2	3	4	2	2	3	3	2	4
Gloucestershire	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	23	3	2	4	4
Somerset	10	2	3	1	1	3	3	2	5	4	3	3
West of England	25	4	3	5	5	4	5	5	6	3	22	9
Wiltshire	10	3	4	2	2	3	2	4	3	1	3	3
<b>South West total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>
London	4	9	9	17	10	10	5	4	4	2	7	8
South East	13	27	35	26	12	31	16	15	18	11	20	23
West Midlands	5	8	4	7	6	7	6	13	6	3	7	7
East Midlands	2	5	3	5	5	2	4	4	2	2	3	3
Eastern	4	10	10	10	9	8	6	5	6	4	6	7
North East	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire and Humberside	1	2	1	3	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	2
North West	2	5	1	6	5	2	4	3	1	1	3	3
England region unknown	1	1	0	1	1	0	4	1	0	1	2	1
Wales	5	8	2	6	4	5	4	7	5	2	8	6
Scotland	0	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Ireland	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom unknown (including IoM & CI)	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.6: Region of domicile for part time students in South Western HEIs**

	<b>Bath Spa University College</b>	<b>The University of Bath</b>	<b>Bournemouth University</b>	<b>The University of Bristol</b>	<b>Dartington College of Arts</b>	<b>The University of Exeter</b>	<b>Falmouth College of Arts</b>	<b>University of Gloucestershire</b>	<b>The University of Plymouth</b>	<b>College of St Mark and St John</b>	<b>University of the West of England, Bristol</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Cornwall	0	0	0	0	17	5	89	1	20	24	1	13
Devon	0	14	2	10	33	79	5	3	54	73	4	32
Dorset	7	0	59	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	8
Gloucestershire	0	14	0	0	0	3	0	49	0	0	9	6
Somerset	26	0	4	7	0	3	0	1	15	0	7	11
West of England	39	0	1	31	0	0	0	4	1	0	54	12
Wiltshire	20	29	11	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	9	4
<b>South West total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>86</b>
London	2	14	1	12	17	0	0	2	1	0	1	1
South East	4	14	17	10	17	5	2	5	3	0	5	5
West Midlands	2	0	1	10	17	0	0	12	1	3	2	2
East Midlands	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	14	1	7	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
North East	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
North West	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
England region unknown	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	2	0	0	1	1
Wales	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	5	1	0	4	2
Scotland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom unknown (including IoM & CI)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.7: Profile of full time students in HERDA-SW institutions**

	<b>% Full time</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>% Black and minority ethnic</b>	<b>% 25 plus</b>
Bath Spa University College	98	68	3	25
The University of Bath	100	45	7	3
Bournemouth University	88	47	5	9
The University of Bristol	100	50	7	3
Dartington College of Arts	98	52	5	27
The University of Exeter	99	51	3	5
Falmouth College of Arts	95	57	3	17
University of Gloucestershire	89	58	4	12
The University of Plymouth	72	50	2	17
College of St Mark and St John	98	65	2	25
University of the West of England, Bristol	91	52	7	10
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10</i>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.8: Profile of part time students in HERDA-SW institutions**

	<b>% Part time</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>% Black and minority ethnic</b>	<b>% 30 plus</b>
Bath Spa University College	2	72	13	65
The University of Bath	0	29	0	0
Bournemouth University	12	80	3	55
The University of Bristol	0	48	7	43
Dartington College of Arts	2	67	0	17
The University of Exeter	1	66	3	79
Falmouth College of Arts	5	89	4	98
University of Gloucestershire	11	47	5	41
The University of Plymouth	28	81	2	79
College of St Mark and St John	2	58	0	64
University of the West of England, Bristol	9	51	5	50
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>67</i>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.9: Number of students by mode of study and region of domicile**

	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
London	114,010	14,850	128,860
South East	112,640	9,590	122,230
<b>South West</b>	<b>63,530</b>	<b>7,230</b>	<b>70,750</b>
West Midlands	67,480	8,790	76,280
East Midlands	52,020	4,680	56,690
Eastern	66,750	6,730	73,490
North East	30,340	4,030	34,380
Yorkshire and Humberside	57,350	7,940	65,290
North West	90,230	11,250	101,470
England region unknown	9,060	1,740	10,810
Wales	39,690	4,310	44,010
Scotland	80,680	8,450	89,130
Northern Ireland	31,970	4,010	35,980
United Kingdom unknown (including IoM & CI)	4,020	480	4,500
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>819,770</i>	<i>94,080</i>	<i>913,850</i>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.10: Most popular HEIs among students from the SW**

Full time students			Part time students		
HEI	N	%	HEI	N	%
The University of Plymouth	5,620	9	The University of Plymouth	3,620	50
University of the West of England, Bristol	5,490	9	University of the West of England, Bristol	1,160	16
Cardiff University	2,610	4	Bournemouth University	670	9
University of Gloucestershire	2,290	4	University of Gloucestershire	390	5
Bournemouth University	2,110	3	Oxford Brookes University	90	1
The University of Exeter	1,970	3	Southampton Institute	80	1
The University of Southampton	1,940	3	The University of Portsmouth	80	1
College of St Mark and St John	1,420	2	The University of Southampton	60	1
The University of Bristol	1,410	2	Falmouth College of Arts	50	1
Bath Spa University College	1,400	2	Institute of Advanced Nursing Education	50	1
The University of Birmingham	1,220	2	The University of Central England in Birmingham	40	1
The University of Oxford	1,160	2	Bath Spa University College	40	1
Southampton Institute	1,120	2	The University of Greenwich	40	1
The University of Bath	1,080	2	Middlesex University	40	0
The University of Portsmouth	1,030	2	The University of Exeter	30	0
Oxford Brookes University	1,030	2	College of St Mark and St John	30	0
University of Wales, Swansea	990	2	The Nottingham Trent University	30	0
<i>And the final two HERDA-SW HEIs:</i>			<i>And the final three HERDA-SW HEIs:</i>		
Falmouth College of Arts	520	1	The University of Bristol	20	0
Dartington College of Arts	150	0	The University of Bath	~	0
			Dartington College of Arts	~	0

~ = fewer than 10

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.11: Where do the SW domiciled go to study? (column per cent)**

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<b>Region of institution</b>	<b>Full time</b>	<b>Part time</b>
London	9	4
South East	17	5
<b>South West</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>83</b>
West Midlands	7	2
East Midlands	5	1
Eastern	3	1
North East	2	0
Yorkshire & Humberside	5	1
North West	4	1
Wales	11	1
Scotland	2	1
Northern Ireland	0	0
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

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Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

Table A3.12: Where do full time students from the sub-regions choose to study? (Column per cent)

Region of institution	Region							Grand Total
	Cornwall	Devon	Dorset	Gloucestershire	Somerset	West of England	Wiltshire	
London	8	8	13	7	10	7	9	9
South East	15	14	28	13	17	12	23	17
<b>South West</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>
West Midlands	5	6	5	10	7	7	7	7
East Midlands	4	4	4	7	5	5	6	5
Eastern	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	3
North East	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Yorkshire & Humberside	4	4	3	6	5	5	5	5
North West	4	4	3	6	5	5	4	4
Wales	12	11	7	12	12	11	10	11
Scotland	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Total (N)</i>	<i>6,530</i>	<i>13,730</i>	<i>8,630</i>	<i>8,040</i>	<i>6,440</i>	<i>12,590</i>	<i>7,560</i>	<i>63,530</i>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

Table A3.13: Where do part time students from the sub-regions choose to study? (Column per cent)

Region of institution	Cornwall	Devon	Dorset	Gloucestershire	Somerset	West of England	Wiltshire	Grand Total
London	3	3	7	5	2	6	11	4
South East	2	1	17	5	3	2	23	5
<b>South West</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>83</b>
West Midlands	1	1	0	9	1	2	2	2
East Midlands	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Eastern	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
North East	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Yorkshire & Humberside	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	1
North West	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wales	1	1	1	4	1	3	2	1
Scotland	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>960</i>	<i>2,450</i>	<i>810</i>	<i>610</i>	<i>830</i>	<i>1,040</i>	<i>530</i>	<i>7,230</i>

Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.14: Where do SW students come from?**

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	<b>Full time %</b>	<b>Part time %</b>
London	8	1
South East	23	5
<b>South West</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>86</b>
West Midlands	7	2
East Midlands	3	0
Eastern	7	1
North East	0	0
Yorkshire and Humberside	2	0
North West	3	0
England region unknown	1	1
Wales	6	2
Scotland	1	0
Northern Ireland	0	0
United Kingdom unknown (including IoM & CI)	1	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

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Source: IES/HESA Student Record July 2001

**Table A3.15: Regional graduate employment destinations by region of domicile (row percentages)**

	Location of employment															
	London	South East	South West	West Midlands	East Midlands	Eastern	North East	Yorks & Humber	North west	England Region unknown	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom unknown (including the Channel Islands and IoM)	Overseas	Not known
<b>Domicile</b>																
London	61	7	<b>1</b>	1	1	3	0	1	1	19	0	0	0	0	3	1
South East	19	46	<b>3</b>	1	2	3	0	2	2	16	1	1	0	0	4	1
<b>South West</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
West Midlands	8	5	<b>4</b>	54	4	3	1	3	3	9	2	1	0	0	3	0
East Midlands	10	6	<b>2</b>	6	46	5	1	8	4	6	1	1	0	0	3	1
Eastern	21	8	<b>2</b>	2	3	42	1	3	2	12	1	1	0	0	3	1
North East	7	4	<b>1</b>	1	2	2	61	7	5	3	0	2	0	0	3	0
Yorkshire & Humberside	8	4	<b>1</b>	3	5	3	3	58	5	5	0	1	0	0	3	0
North West	7	4	<b>2</b>	3	2	2	1	5	63	5	1	1	0	0	4	0
England	16	15	<b>8</b>	5	4	6	2	6	10	12	2	1	0	0	11	1
Wales	7	6	<b>5</b>	3	1	2	0	1	5	5	59	1	0	0	3	0
Scotland	5	2	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	0	76	0	0	5	0
Northern Ireland	3	2	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	0	5	67	0	9	0
United Kingdom unknown	8	6	<b>4</b>	2	7	2	0	4	6	6	4	2	0	43	5	1
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>12</i>	<i><b>6</b></i>	<i>7</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table A3.16: New graduates in employment in the South West – sub regional analysis (per cent)**

	<b>Cornwall</b>	<b>Devon</b>	<b>Dorset</b>	<b>Gloucestershire</b>	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Wiltshire</b>	<b>West of England</b>	<b>All South West</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
Female	58	58	57	57	61	55	56	57
Male	42	42	43	43	39	45	44	43
<b>Age group</b>								
20 and under	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
21-24	64	64	71	72	68	71	72	69
25-29	13	11	13	12	11	12	12	12
30 and over	21	22	12	14	18	14	13	16
<b>Ethnicity</b>								
White	92	91	92	92	92	89	85	89
Minority Ethnic	2	1	3	2	1	4	4	3
Ethnicity unknown	7	7	6	6	7	7	11	8
<b>Subject of study</b>								
Medicine & dentistry	5	2	3	2	3	1	2	2
Subjects allied to medicine	10	11	14	8	10	8	8	10
Biological sciences	5	7	6	6	6	6	7	6
Veterinary science	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Agriculture & related subjects	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
Physical sciences	7	6	5	5	6	5	6	6
Mathematical sciences	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Computer science	2	3	6	6	4	7	6	5
Engineering & technology	5	7	4	7	6	8	8	7
Architecture, building & planning	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
Social, economic & political studies	4	9	8	7	9	7	9	8
Law	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Business & administrative studies	7	8	13	10	9	13	10	10
Librarianship & information science	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	2
Languages	2	4	3	4	3	3	5	4
Humanities	4	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
Creative arts & design	12	8	7	9	7	7	8	8
Education	24	18	13	16	20	19	13	16
Combined/Invalid code supplied	3	5	6	8	6	7	8	7

Table A3.16 (cont'd)

	<b>Cornwall</b>	<b>Devon</b>	<b>Dorset</b>	<b>Gloucestershire</b>	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Wiltshire</b>	<b>West of England</b>	<b>All South West</b>
<b>Graduate type</b>								
Poached graduates	18	16	21	24	16	26	20	20
Incomers	7	12	13	13	6	9	18	13
Returners	25	23	36	27	36	36	25	28
SW Loyals	50	49	31	36	42	29	37	38
<b>Employment type</b>								
Entered work (paid or unpaid, including voluntary work)	81	83	85	81	78	85	81	82
Returned to/remained with previous employer	15	14	14	17	19	13	17	16
Self-employed	4	2	1	2	3	2	2	2
<b>Level of employment</b>								
SOC 1 — Managerial	11	18	15	17	13	16	16	16
SOC 2 — Professional	38	31	29	32	38	38	32	33
SOC 3 — Associate professional	22	21	27	23	23	22	23	23
SOC 4-9 — All other occupations	26	28	28	27	25	23	28	27
<i>Total number</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>1,790</i>	<i>1,080</i>	<i>1,210</i>	<i>590</i>	<i>1,150</i>	<i>3,190</i>	<i>9,460</i>

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table A3.17: The estimation of priority economic sectors in the First Destinations Survey**

<b>Priority Economic Sector</b>	<b>Standard Industrial Classification</b>	
Food and Drink	{0100} Agriculture and related activities	
	{0110} Growing of crops; market gardening; horticulture	
	{0120} Farming of animals	
	{0130} Growing of crops combined with farming of animals (mixed farming)	
	{0140} Agricultural and animal husbandry activities, except veterinary activities	
	{1500} Manufacturing of food products and beverages	
	{1510} Manufacture of food products	
ICT	{1520} Manufacture of beverages	
	{2210} Publishing	
	{2230} Reproduction of recorded media	
	{3000} Manufacture and assembly of office machinery and computers	
	{3220} Manufacture of television and radio transmission equipment and telephone apparatus	
	{3230} Manufacture of television and radio receivers, sound or video recording apparatus and associated goods	
	{6420} Telecommunications	
	{7210} Hardware consultancy	
	{7220} Software consultancy and supply	
	{7230} Data processing	
Marine	{7240} Data base activities	
	{7250} Maintenance and repair of office, accounting and computing machinery	
	{7260} Other computer related activities	
	{3510} Building and repairing of ships and boats	
	Marine/ Environmental Technologies*	{2900} Manufacture of machinery and equipment not elsewhere classified
		Environmental Technologies
	{3700} Recycling	
{4100} Collection, purification and distribution of water (excluding sewage treatment)		
{4510} Site preparation		
{4520} Building of complete constructions or parts thereof; civil engineering		
{4530} Building installation		
{7420} Architectural and engineering activities and related technical consultancy		

**Table A3.17 (cont'd)**

<b>Priority Economic Sector</b>	<b>Standard Industrial Classification</b>
	{7430} Technical testing and analysis
	{9000} Sewage and refuse disposal, sanitation and similar activities
Environmental Technologies /Biotechnology**	{7310} Research and experimental development on natural sciences and engineering
Biotechnology	{2440} Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemicals and botanical products
	*** {3300} Manufacture of medical, precision and optical instruments, watches and clocks
Advanced Engineering	{2900} Manufacture of machinery and equipment NEC
	{3100} Manufacture of electrical machinery and apparatus NEC
	{3210} Manufacture of electronic components
	{3400} Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers
	{3530} Manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft
Tourism	{5500} Hotels and restaurants
	{6330} Activities of travel agencies and tour operators; tourist assistance activities not elsewhere classified
	{9233} Fair and amusement park activities
	{9250} Library, archives, museums and other cultural activities
	{9260} Sporting activities
	{9270} Other recreational activities
Creative	{7440} Advertising
	{9210} Motion picture and video activities
	{9220} Radio and television activities
	{9230} Other entertainment activities
	{9231} Artistic and literary creation and interpretation
	{9232} Operation of arts facilities
Other industries	All other codes
Unknown	Unknown

\* These graduates were allocated to the marine and environmental technologies industries, in ratio to the size of the main groups

\*\* These graduates were allocated to the environmental technologies and biotechnology industries, in ratio to the size of the main groups

\*\*\* The manufacture of medical, precision and optical instruments industry {sic 3300} has been allocated to the biotechnology sector for these analyses, although it (and in particular, the medical equipment industry {sic 3310} which is subsumed within it) could equally be considered part of the advanced engineering priority economic sector

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table A3.18: Numbers of new graduates finding employment in priority economic sectors, UK**

	<b>Missed opportunities</b>	<b>Poached graduates</b>	<b>Passers through</b>	<b>Incomers</b>	<b>Lost SW Students</b>	<b>Returners</b>	<b>Lost SW graduates</b>	<b>SW Loyals</b>	<b>All graduates</b>
Food and Drink	1,370	30	50	~	50	40	10	50	1,600
ICT	8,220	180	350	100	370	190	80	170	9,660
Marine	40	~	~	0	~	~	0	10	70
Env Tech	3,580	110	140	40	140	100	40	110	4,260
Biotech	1,480	30	60	~	50	10	10	20	1,670
Advanced engineering	2,100	90	110	30	70	80	20	80	2,570
Tourism	5,840	70	270	90	240	170	40	120	6,830
Creative	3,150	40	180	30	170	60	40	50	3,710
Other industries	89,330	1,300	2,960	920	2,970	1,960	650	2,190	103,010
Unknown	530	10	20	0	20	10	~	~	600
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>115,640</i>	<i>1,870</i>	<i>4,120</i>	<i>1,230</i>	<i>4,080</i>	<i>2,620</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>3,530</i>	<i>133,980</i>

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table A3.19: Distribution of new graduate employment in priority economic sectors by region (row per cent)**

	London	South East	South West	West Midlands	East Midlands	Eastern	North East	Yorks & Humberside	North west	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Overseas	Unknown	Number
Food and Drink	7	11	<b>7</b>	7	11	8	3	9	9	4	8	2	4	9	1,770
ICT	23	18	<b>6</b>	5	3	7	2	5	6	3	6	3	3	11	10,900
Marine	3	26	<b>25</b>	0	3	0	2	0	8	0	18	2	7	6	70
Env Tech	11	14	<b>8</b>	9	5	8	2	6	10	3	8	3	3	9	4,660
Biotech	8	24	<b>4</b>	2	5	15	4	4	11	2	5	2	4	10	1,870
Advanced engineering	4	15	<b>11</b>	11	7	12	1	2	11	3	9	3	2	7	1,750
Tourism	14	11	<b>6</b>	5	5	5	3	7	10	4	9	1	11	9	7,490
Creative	41	6	<b>4</b>	4	3	4	2	4	6	3	5	1	3	16	4,410
Other industries	16	11	<b>6</b>	7	5	6	3	7	10	4	8	2	4	10	115,830
Unknown	12	8	<b>3</b>	6	5	4	1	4	5	3	5	0	8	35	930
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>12</i>	<i><b>6</b></i>	<i>7</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>149,670</i>

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

**Table A3.20: New graduate employment in priority economic sectors in the South West by HEI**

	<b>Bath Spa University College</b>	<b>The University of Bath</b>	<b>Bournemouth University</b>	<b>The University of Bristol</b>	<b>Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE*</b>	<b>The University of Exeter</b>	<b>Falmouth College of Arts</b>	<b>The Open University</b>	<b>The University of Plymouth</b>	<b>College of St Mark and St John</b>	<b>University of the West of England, Bristol</b>	<b>Other institutions</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Food and Drink	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0	30	0	~	70	130
ICT	~	40	30	~	30	20	~	0	~	20	70	370	650
Marine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	~	~	~	~	20
Env Tech	~	10	10	10	~	10	0	0	40	~	60	200	360
Biotech	0	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	~	0	~	50	70
Advanced Engineering	0	20	~	~	~	~	0	0	10	0	20	120	190
Tourism	20	~	30	~	30	20	~	0	40	20	30	240	440
Creative	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	20	~	20	100	180
Other industries	300	210	340	210	390	370	40	~	760	220	1,050	3,320	7,205
Unknown	0	0	0	0	~	~	0	0	~	0	~	20	30
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>340</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>420</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>470</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>~</i>	<i>980</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>1,270</i>	<i>4,500</i>	<i>9,270</i>

~ = fewer than ten cases

\*Now the University of Gloucestershire

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

Table A3.21: Percentage of full-time, first degree graduates in each subject area entering employment, and entering employment in the SW

	Subjects allied to medicine	Biological sciences	Agriculture & related subjects	Physical sciences	Mathematical sciences	Computer science	Engineering & technology	Architecture, building & planning	Social, economic & political studies	Law	Business & administrative studies	Librarianship & information science	Languages	Humanities	Creative arts & design	Education	Combined/Invalid code supplied	All subjects
<b>Bath Spa University College</b>																		
% in employment	—	~	~	~	—	—	—	—	81	—	~	—	~	~	56	93	61	66
% in SW employment	—	~	~	~	—	—	—	—	56	—	~	—	~	~	26	62	42	41
<b>The University of Bath</b>																		
% in employment	~	48	—	60	73	93	77	69	73	—	68	—	80	—	—	~	77	70
% in SW employment	~	11	—	13	22	25	19	6	25	—	10	—	15	—	—	~	15	17
<b>Bournemouth University</b>																		
% in employment	80	—	86	64	—	93	78	—	69	49	88	87	—	—	71	—	—	81
% in SW employment	53	—	24	19	—	29	14	—	36	11	20	15	—	—	13	—	—	21
<b>The University of Bristol</b>																		
% in employment	29	53	~	53	69	90	76	—	69	25	—	—	66	52	52	—	~	63
% in SW employment	5	6	~	3	10	30	11	—	6	2	—	—	5	1	7	—	~	8
<b>Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE*</b>																		
% in employment	94	63	~	60	—	86	—	~	67	—	87	81	74	51	65	97	78	76
% in SW employment	48	28	~	21	—	54	—	~	40	—	36	50	32	29	27	53	40	37
<b>Dartington College of Arts</b>																		
% in employment	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	53	—	—	53
% in SW employment	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	—	—	22

Table A3.21 (cont'd)

	Subjects allied to medicine	Biological sciences	Agriculture & related subjects	Physical sciences	Mathematical sciences	Computer science	Engineering & technology	Architecture, building & planning	Social, economic & political studies	Law	Business & administrative studies	Librarianship & information science	Languages	Humanities	Creative arts & design	Education	Combined/Invalid code supplied	All subjects
<b>The University of Exeter</b>																		
% in employment	—	62	—	59	71	75	76	—	70	31	84	—	60	53	56	96	54	65
% in SW employment	—	19	—	12	13	21	20	—	14	8	25	—	10	14	20	41	11	16
<b>Falmouth College of Arts</b>																		
% in employment	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	65	—	~	52	—	—	53
% in SW employment	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14	—	~	19	—	—	19
<b>The University of Plymouth</b>																		
% in employment	96	59	79	66	65	82	78	73	65	40	78	—	59	47	58	95	~	70
% in SW employment	77	27	32	26	30	30	30	31	36	23	28	—	31	33	25	45	~	31
<b>College of St Mark and St John</b>																		
% in employment	—	—	—	—	—	~	—	—	64	—	—	78	48	47	~	91	~	75
% in SW employment	—	—	—	—	—	~	—	—	42	—	—	38	34	36	~	44	~	42
<b>University of the West of England, Bristol</b>																		
% in employment	95	67	100	~	~	80	92	68	76	30	75	—	47	55	62	98	44	69
% in SW employment	51	34	50	~	~	44	52	30	36	18	32	—	17	26	39	76	23	36
<b>All HEIs</b>																		
% in employment	80	58	68	55	62	78	72	75	68	34	78	76	60	55	58	89	63	67
% in SW employment	4	4	6	5	4	6	5	4	4	2	4	5	3	3	4	7	3	4

—No graduates in this subject area in FDS; ~ fewer than 20 graduates in this subject area in FDS; \*Now the University of Gloucestershire

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

### A3.2.1 Priority economic sectors

The priority economic sector definitions are drawn from specific Standard Industrial Classification codes, as identified by SWRDA and, in respect of Creative Industries, modified by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. They are:

**Table A3.22: SIC code and descriptions for priority economic sectors**

#### Advanced engineering & Marine

29.11: Engines, turbines (not aircraft)	34.10: Motor vehicle manufacture
29.40: Machine tool manufacture	34.201: Motor vehicle bodywork manufacture
31.30: Insulated cable manufacture	34.202: Trailers manufacture
32.10: Electronic components manufacture	34.203: Caravan manufacture
33.20: Testing/navigatng <i>etc.</i> equipment manufacture	34.30: Motor vehicle parts <i>etc.</i> manufacture
33.30: Industrial process control equipment manufacture	35.11: Ship building, repairing
33.401: Spectacles and lenses manufacture	35.12: Boat building, repairing
33.402: Optical precision equipment manufacture	35.30: Aircraft, spacecraft manufacture
33.403: Photographic and cinema equipment manufacture	

#### Biotechnology & Environmental technology

24.41: Basic pharmaceutical manufacture	41.00: Water supply etc
24.42: Pharmaceutical preparations man.	*45.11-45.50: Building demol., earth moving
29.23: Cool., ventilat eqt (not domestic)	73.10: Research, natural sciences, engin.
31.20: Elec distribution, control man.	74.20: Archit., engineering etc consultancy (75 per cent, 25 per cent Creative Industries DCMS)
**33.10: Medical eqt, appliances manufacture	74.30: Technical testing, analysis
37.10: Metal scrap recycling	90.00: Sewage, refuse disposal etc
37.20: Non-metal scrap recycling	

#### Food and drink

01.11: Growing cereals, other crops	15.43: Margarine, edible fat manufacture
01.12: Growing veg, horticulture, nursery	15.51: Dairies, cheese making
01.13: Grwg. fruit, nut, beverage, spice crop	15.52: Ice cream manufacture
01.21: Farming cattle, dairy	15.61: Grain, mill products
01.22: Farming sheep, goats, horses etc	15.62: Starches, starch products
01.23: Farming pigs	15.71: Farm animal feed manufacture
01.24: Farming poultry	15.72: Pet food manufacture
01.25: Farming other animals	15.81: Bread, fresh pastry, cakes manufact.
01.30: Mixed farming (crops & animals)	15.82: Biscuits, rusks, preserved pastries
01.41: Agricultural services:	15.83: Sugar manufacture
01.42: Animal husbandry service (not vet)	15.84: Chocolate, cocoa, sugar confect'y

**Table A3.22 (cont'd)**

05.01: Fishing	15.85: Macaroni, noodles, couscous <i>etc.</i>
05.02: Fish hatcheries, farms	15.86: Tea, coffee manufacture
15.111: Slaught'ng (not poultry, rabbit)	15.87: Condiment, seasoning manufacture
15.112: Animal by-product processing	15.88: Homogenised, dietetic food products
15.113: Fellmongery	15.89: Other food products manufacture
15.12: Poultry production, preserving	15.91: Distilled alcoholic drinks
15.13: Meat, poultry products	15.92: Ethyl alcohol from fermentation
15.20: Fish, fish products, preserving	15.93: Wine production
15.31: Potato products, preserving	15.94: Cider, other fruit wine production
15.32: Fruit, vegetable juice processing	15.95: Manuf of other non-dist fermen beverages
15.33: Other fruit, veg processing	15.96: Beer production
15.41: Crude oils, fats manufacture	15.97: Malt production
15.42: Refined oils, fats manufacture	15.98: Mineral water, soft drink prodctn.

**ICT**

22.11: Book publishing (0 per cent — transferred to Creative industries DCMS)	32.202: Radio, electronic goods manuf.
22.12: Newspaper publishing (0 per cent — transferred to Creative industries DCMS)	32.30: TV, radio, HiFi etc eqt manufacture
22.13: Journal, periodical publishing (0 per cent — transferred to Creative industries DCMS)	64.20: Telecommunications
22.14: Sound recording publishing (0 per cent — transferred to Creative industries DCMS)	72.10: Computer hardware consultancy
22.15: Other publishing (50 per cent, 50 per cent Creative Industries DCMS)	72.20: Computer software consultancy (75 per cent, 25 per cent Creative Industries DCMS)
22.33: Reproduction of computer media (75 per cent, 25 per cent Creative Industries DCMS)	72.30: Data processing
30.02: Computers, IT eqt manufacture	72.40: Data base activities
32.201: Telegraph, telephone eqt man.	72.50: Repair of office, computer eqt
	72.60: Other computer activities

**Creative industries (DCMS definition)**

22.11: Book publishing	74.81: Photographic activities (25 per cent)
22.12: Newspaper publishing	92.11: Motion picture, video production
22.13: Journal, periodical publishing	92.12: Motion picture, video distribution
22.14: Sound recording publishing	92.13: Motion picture projection
22.15: Other publishing (50 per cent)	92.20: Radio, TV activities
22.31: Reproduction of sound recording (25 per cent)	92.31: Artistic, literary creation <i>etc.</i>
22.32: Reproduction of video recording (25 per cent)	92.32: Arts facilities (50 per cent)
22.33: Reproduction of computer media (25 per cent)	92.34: Other entertainment activities

**Table A3.22 (cont'd)**

72.20: Computer software consultancy (25 per cent)	92.40: News agency activities
74.20: Archit., engineering, etc consultancy (25 per cent)	92.72: Other recreational activities (25 per cent)
74.40: Advertising	
<b>Tourism</b>	
55.11: Hotels, motels with restaurant	92.34: Other entertainment activities
55.12: Hotels, motels without restaurant	92.51: Library, archive activities
55.21: Youth hostel, mountain refuge	92.52: Museum activities
55.22: Camping, caravan sites	92.53: Botanical, zoological gardens etc
55.23: Other provision of lodgings	92.61: Operation of sports arenas, stadium
63.301-3: Travel agency., organisers, guides	92.62: Other sporting activities
63.304: Other tourist assistance	92.71: Gambling, betting activities
92.33: Fair, amusement park activities	92.72: Other recreational activities (75 per cent, 25 per cent Creative Industries DCMS)

Source: IES/LFS Winter Quarter 2001

\*In the Labour Force Survey it is not possible to extract:

- 45.11 Demolition and wrecking of buildings
- 45.24 Construction of water projects
- 45.32 Insulation work activities.

from this general Building and earth moving code. This means that the figures for employment in the Biotechnology and Environmental Technology priority economic sector are overestimates, and we believe that the proportion of the workforce with a first or higher degree has most likely been underestimated.

\*\* The medical equipment industry {sic 33.10} has been allocated to the biotechnology sector for these analyses, although it could equally be considered part of the advanced engineering priority economic sector. In total, the South West has fewer than 10,000 employees working in the medical equipment industry, of whom, a minority have degrees.

**Table A3.23: Regional distribution of graduate (first or higher degree) employment in priority economic sectors (working age, main job only)**

	North East	North West	Yorks & Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total
<b>Advanced engineering &amp; Marine</b>													
No. ('000)	~	11	~	11	14	19	~	16	<b>16</b>	~	10	~	111
row %	~	10	~	10	13	17	~	15	<b>14</b>	~	9	~	100
col %	~	2	~	5	4	5	~	2	<b>4</b>	~	2	~	2
<b>Biotechnology &amp; Environmental technology</b>													
No. ('000)	~	40	24	17	25	38	68	62	<b>23</b>	~	35	~	354
row %	~	11	7	5	7	11	19	17	<b>7</b>	~	10	~	100
col %	~	9	8	7	7	11	6	9	<b>6</b>	~	9	~	8
<b>Food and drink</b>													
No. ('000)	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	10	~	~	~	~	50
row %	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	20	~	~	~	~	100
col %	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	1
<b>ICT</b>													
No. ('000)	~	23	11	13	24	27	112	80	<b>33</b>	~	25	~	364
row %	~	6	3	4	7	8	31	22	<b>9</b>	~	7	~	100
col %	~	5	4	6	7	8	10	12	<b>9</b>	~	6	~	8
<b>Creative industries (DCMS definition)</b>													
No. ('000)	~	16	10	~	~	20	117	38	<b>20</b>	~	12	~	262
row %	~	6	4	~	~	8	45	15	<b>8</b>	~	4	~	100
col %	~	4	3	~	~	6	11	6	<b>6</b>	~	3	~	6
<b>Tourism</b>													
No. ('000)	~	10	~	~	~	12	27	16	~	~	~	~	105
row %	~	10	~	~	~	11	26	15	~	~	~	~	100
col %	~	2	~	~	~	3	2	2	~	~	~	~	2
<b>All other industries</b>													
No. ('000)	99	344	249	182	259	233	776	456	<b>254</b>	119	311	92	3,375
row %	3	10	7	5	8	7	23	14	<b>8</b>	4	9	3	100
col %	80	77	81	77	75	66	70	67	<b>71</b>	81	76	82	73
<b>All industries</b>													
No. ('000)	124	447	307	237	346	352	1,109	679	<b>357</b>	146	407	112	4,622
row %	3	10	7	5	7	8	24	15	<b>8</b>	3	9	2	100
col %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>	100	100	100	100

~ Estimate below threshold of statistical reliability (10,000)

Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

**Table A3.24: Gross weekly earnings (£) of graduates of working age, by region**

	Years since completing full time education						
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+
North West	279	404	508	490	~	635	558
Yorks & Humberside	265	410	596	618	548	~	542
East Midlands	248	500	359	423	577	~	481
West Midlands	277	427	467	~	554	635	497
East of England	356	529	538	587	481	481	553
London	413	497	635	589	635	623	615
South East	365	471	577	500	542	635	548
<b>South West</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>481</b>
Scotland	352	438	525	493	577	531	538
All UK	346	442	531	531	565	558	538

~ Estimate below threshold of statistical reliability (30,000)

No estimate can be made for NE, Wales and Northern Ireland due to small sample sizes

Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

Table A3.25: Economic activity by region

	North East	North West	Yorks & Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total
<b>Employees (all types)</b>													
No. ('000)	115	398	284	238	316	363	849	672	<b>313</b>	144	366	109	4,167
Col %	80	81	78	82	83	80	75	80	<b>76</b>	76	78	84	79
<b>Self employed</b>													
No. ('000)	~	37	31	18	27	44	139	76	<b>42</b>	15	39	10	487
Col %	~	8	8	6	7	10	12	9	<b>10</b>	8	8	7	9
<b>ILO Unemployed</b>													
No. ('000)	~	11	15	~	~	11	49	20	<b>12</b>	~	14	~	154
Col %	~	2	4	~	~	2	4	2	<b>3</b>	~	3	~	3
<b>Seeking but not available for work or Not available but would like work</b>													
No. ('000)	~	~	~	~	~	~	29	25	~	~	15	~	128
Col %	~	~	~	~	~	~	3	3	~	~	3	~	2
<b>Not seeking and not wanting work</b>													
No. ('000)	12	36	27	21	22	30	70	50	<b>36</b>	20	35	~	367
Col %	8	7	7	7	6	7	6	6	<b>9</b>	10	7	~	7
<i>of whom: does want/need job or retired</i>													
No. ('000)	~	10	~	~	~	~	10	11	<b>12</b>	~	10	~	90
Col %	~	2	~	~	~	~	1	1	<b>3</b>	~	2	~	2
<b>Total</b>													
No. ('000)	145	488	366	289	382	456	1,136	844	<b>412</b>	188	469	130	5,304
Col %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>	100	100	100	100

Source: IES/LFS Winter Quarter, 2001

**Table A3.26: Subject of study of graduates (first and higher degree) of working age, working in South West and UK**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>South West</b>		<b>UK</b>	
	<b>No. ('000)</b>		<b>No. ('000)</b>	
Medicine	10	3	136	3
Medical Related subjects	25	7	300	6
Biological sciences	25	7	245	5
Agricultural sciences	~	~	37	1
Physical/Environmental sciences	33	9	353	8
Mathematical sciences and Computing	27	8	364	8
Engineering	34	10	389	8
Technology	~	~	70	2
Architecture and related subjects	12	3	110	2
Social sciences	44	12	646	14
Business and financial studies	29	8	567	12
Librarianship and information studies	~	~	55	1
Linguistics, English, Celtic and Ancient Languages	15	4	179	4
European languages	~	~	137	3
Other languages	~	~	19	0
Humanities	17	5	282	6
Arts	25	7	316	7
Education	41	11	409	9
Unknown	~	~	11	0

~ Estimate below threshold of statistical reliability (10,000)

Source: IES/LFS Winter 2001 Quarter

**Table A3.27: Industry of new graduate employment by region of employment (column per cent)**

	London	South East	South West	West Midlands	East Midlands	Eastern	North East	Yorkshire and Humberside North west	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Overseas	Unknown	Grand Total	
Agriculture and fishing	0	1	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Mining and quarrying	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Manufacturing	8	11	<b>9</b>	8	11	12	7	7	9	7	7	7	7	8	9
Electricity, gas and water supply	0	1	<b>1</b>	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1
Construction	1	1	<b>1</b>	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	7	7	<b>8</b>	7	9	7	8	8	9	8	9	9	2	6	7
Hotels and restaurants	1	3	<b>3</b>	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	4	2	3
Transport, storage and communication	4	5	<b>5</b>	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	5	9	4	4
Financial intermediation	40	30	<b>25</b>	22	20	25	17	23	22	15	22	20	21	32	27
Public administration and defence	5	7	<b>8</b>	6	9	6	8	6	6	10	5	6	4	8	6
Education	12	18	<b>18</b>	22	21	21	21	20	21	22	16	21	33	14	18
Health and social work	11	12	<b>16</b>	19	15	14	24	20	18	19	23	23	6	14	16
Other community, social and personal	10	4	<b>5</b>	4	4	5	4	5	5	6	5	3	8	8	6
Private households with employed persons	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International organisations and bodies	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Unknown	0	0	<b>0</b>	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1
Grand Total	100	100	<b>100</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	26,038	17,813	<b>9,456</b>	10,024	7,757	9,384	4,772	10,401	14,319	5,722	11,620	3,479	5,902	15,955	152,642

Source: IES/HESA First Destination Survey, 1999/2000

Table A3.28: Graduate intensity in priority economic sectors, by region (per cent)

	North East	North West	Yorks & Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	All UK
Advanced engineering & Marine	~	12	~	20	11	22	~	15	<b>19</b>	~	18	~	15
Biotechnology & Environmental technology	~	14	10	9	11	13	20	15	<b>9</b>	~	15	~	13
Food and drink	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	12	~	~	~	~	6
ICT	~	26	23	32	27	32	41	39	<b>37</b>	~	32	~	34
Creative industries (DCMS definition)	~	31	33	~	~	29	53	37	<b>43</b>	~	42	~	42
Tourism	~	~	~	~	~	15	21	14	~	~	~	~	12
<b>Percentage of graduates in all priority economic sector employment</b>	11	15	11	12	14	17	33	21	<b>16</b>	9	17	12	18
All other industries	12	15	14	13	14	13	27	17	<b>15</b>	13	18	20	17
All industries	12	15	14	13	14	14	29	17	<b>15</b>	13	18	18	17
~ Estimate below threshold of statistical reliability (10,000)													

Source: IES/LFS Winter Quarter, 2001

**Table A3.29: Full time, first degree graduate destinations by institution (row per cent)**

	<b>Entered work (paid or unpaid, including voluntary work)</b>	<b>Returned to/remained with previous employer</b>	<b>Self- employed</b>	<b>Entered study or training</b>	<b>Seeking employment or training</b>	<b>Not available for employ — ment, study or training</b>	<b>N</b>
Bath Spa University College	55	11	3	17	8	6	740
The University of Bath	58	12	1	17	4	9	1,330
Bournemouth University	68	12	2	6	7	5	1,720
The University of Bristol	53	10	1	24	4	8	2,490
Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE	60	16	3	10	5	6	1,240
Dartington College of Arts	41	13	9	17	14	6	60
The University of Exeter	58	6	1	22	6	7	2,070
Falmouth College of Arts	47	6	6	7	26	8	290
The University of Plymouth	58	12	2	14	7	7	2,990
College of St Mark and St John	74	1	1	15	4	5	540
University of the West of England, Bristol	53	16	1	17	6	7	3,110
Grand Total	58	11	2	16	6	7	16,580

\*Now University of Gloucestershire

Source: IES/HESA First Destinations Survey, 1999/2000

## Appendix 4: The Leavers Survey

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### A4.1 The postal survey

The aim of this survey was to gather the views, experiences and expectations of individuals in the final few months of their first degree studies in a university or college in the South West, at the time when they would be thinking about their future careers and when many would be poised to enter the labour market. This would therefore allow us to explore the factors that influence students to study and graduates to work in the South West.

#### A4.1.1 The sample

It was decided to survey 10,000 individuals, approximately 8,000 from full time and 2,000 from part-time courses, and a sample of UK final year undergraduates (from first degree courses) was drawn from 14 higher education institutions in the South West, all members of HERDA-SW. The sample frame for students who had studied full time was largely designed to approximate the full time population distribution across these institutions (see Table A4.1). However, in order to gain sufficient numbers of respondents from the smaller institutions, in some instances, the entire cohort of first degree finalists were sampled. The part time sample was drawn from a subset of HERDA-SW organisations who offered part-time courses: the universities of Bournemouth, Gloucestershire and Plymouth, and the Open University. The Open University sample was selected by identifying those who were supported by the regional centre in the South West, and those who were studying modules that would bring them to the required number of points to achieve a first degree.

Each institution randomly selected the required number, or as close to as possible, of full time and part time UK final year students; and a final sample of 9,376 was achieved.

**Table A4.1: Leavers survey sample by institution and mode of study**

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Sample (n)</b>	<b>FT sample (n)</b>	<b>PT sample (n)</b>	<b>FT sample distribution (%)</b>	<b>FT population distribution (%)</b>
1	Arts Institute, Bournemouth*	223	223	0	3	1
2	University of Bath	500	500	0	6	7
3	Bath Spa University College	300	300	0	4	4
4	Bournemouth University	785	700	85	9	9
5	University of Bristol	1,000	1,000	0	13	14
6	Dartington College of Arts*	122	122	0	2	1
7	University of Exeter	800	800	0	10	11
8	Falmouth College of Arts#	300	300	0	4	2
9	University of Gloucestershire	750	600	150	8	8
10	Open University - South West#	657	0	657	0	0
11	University of Plymouth	2,000	1,500	500	19	19
12	Royal Agricultural College*	145	145	0	2	1
13	College of St Mark and St John	294	294	0	4	3
14	University of the West of England	1,500	1,500	0	19	20
	ALL	9,376	7,984	192	100	100

\* whole population sampled

# population oversampled

Source: IES, 2001

### **A4.1.2 The survey**

An eight page questionnaire booklet (with an inclusive introductory letter) was mailed to all the individuals selected for the sample during May 2002, as they were coming to the end of their courses (with the exception of Open University students, where the educational year runs to October).

Ten of the 14 institutions maintained their own samples, due to data protection concerns, and distributed the questionnaires to students themselves, whereas IES mailed directly to the sample at the remaining four institutions. This affected the strategies available to improve response rates, and meant that a targeted reminder (*ie* sent only to those who have not returned a completed questionnaire) was not possible. Instead, the entire sample was sent a second copy of the questionnaire in mid June 2002 with a letter reminding them about the survey and asking them to complete the questionnaire and return it, if they had not already done so. The entire sample was then mailed again (for a third time) at the beginning of July 2002 with a postcard reminder which gave details of how to obtain a copy of the questionnaire if they had not participated in the survey but wanted to do so and

no longer had their questionnaire. The first mailing was sent to individuals term time addresses, whereas the second and third mailings were to individuals home addresses in order to increase the likelihood of students receiving the questionnaire during such a potentially turbulent period. A further strategy was employed to improve response rates. Respondents were given the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw to win £250 vouchers. The draw was made in November 2002 and the prize was won by a graduate from the University of Plymouth.

The survey was in the field for three months and was closed mid August 2002.

The questionnaire consisted of mostly closed questions (*eg* tick boxes) with only a few open ended questions to ease completion and analysis, and collected data on:

- Individual's background
- Study choices made
- Career plans in the short and medium term
- Activities undertaken to improve employability
- And attitudes towards studying, living and working in the South West.

Following advice from the Open University, an amended version of the questionnaire was used for the OU sample which took into account the differing nature and characteristics of Open University students and study. Care was taken however to ensure that responses from OU students could be analysed alongside responses from other South West students.

### **A4.1.3 Response rate**

Following the successful strategies to boost response, a total of 4,085 completed questionnaires were received before the survey closed. This gave a final response rate of 44 per cent. A further few questionnaires were received after the survey closed but these were not included in the analysis. It was possible to identify the response rates for each institution (see Table A4.2) and they varied from a low of 29 per cent for the Arts Institute, Bournemouth to a high of 64 per cent for the Open University.

It should be noted that a number of respondents reported that they were studying for a qualification other than a first degree, these included individuals studying at postgraduate level, or at sub degree level. As these individuals were not our core target group (and likely to have different opinions and priorities), and were small in number, they were removed from the analysis. This gave a final response for analysis of 3,817 cases.

**Table A4.2: Response rate by institution**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Response rate (%)</b>
Arts Institute, Bournemouth	223	65	29
University of Bath	500	198	40
Bath Spa University College	300	148	49
Bournemouth University	785	337	43
University of Bristol	1,000	444	44
Dartington College of Arts	122	23	19
University of Exeter	800	326	41
Falmouth College of Arts	300	106	35
University of Gloucestershire	750	290	39
Open University - South West	657	422	64
University of Plymouth	2,000	895	45
Royal Agricultural College	145	49	34
College of St Mark and St John	294	117	40
University of the West of England	1,500	552	37
ALL	9,376	4,085*	44

\* the total reported here is the overall total including those where institution was unknown. The true sum of the column is therefore not given.

Source: IES 2002

### **A4.3 Weighting responses**

We felt it was necessary to 'weight' our postal survey sample data in order to address the various biases it contained. Essentially, weighting is a method of allowing for biases within a sample, that is, controlling for points at which a sample does not reflect the proportions of the population at large. Weighting takes account of over- and under-representation of groups in a sample by applying an individually calculated multiplier to each case (or respondent). In this way, it adjusts the 'weight' or value attached to each response in order to match that of the population.

Using HESA First Destination Statistics (1999/2000) for first degree students in the region (excluding those studying combined studies or unknown subjects), we assessed the representativeness of our sample by comparing certain key demographic variables. These variables were gender, age, ethnic group, course subject area and institution. Where the proportions between the two datasets did not match or were not similar, a bias was noted. Importantly, the HESA data provided information only on first degree full-time students, and, in addition, did not contain details on students attending the Royal Agricultural College (RAC) or the Arts Institute Bournemouth (AIB). In order to match up the

sample with the population, we were obliged therefore temporarily to exclude ('filter' off) those who had studied part-time or with the OU, and were not therefore classified as full-time, as well as data which dealt with RAC and AIB students. In addition, a small number of respondents (268) were identified as having studied other than to first degree level. These individuals were permanently excluded from the analysis to ensure consistency of approach and cleanliness of the data.

Having made our initial assessments, we felt gender and course subject area represented the most significant bias areas. These variables are important because studies have shown that gender and subject of study are important identifiable factors that influence career plans. Therefore a weight variable was calculated in order to match the sample more closely to the population as described by the HESA statistics on these two characteristics.

### **Calculating the weight variable**

We ran a cross-tabulation of gender against course subject area, to find the proportions of these two variables within the sample. These were noted as 'observed proportions'. In Table A4.1 below, these values are set against the 'expected proportions' for gender and subject, that is, the proportions found within the population at large. In order to calculate a weight which controls for both gender and subject, the expected proportion must be divided by the observed proportion. For example, to calculate the weight value for males who studied Maths/IT in this instance, 5.3 is divided by 3.4. The outcomes of these division calculations are shown in Table A4.2.

Since the population data did not carry information concerning either part-time/OU students, or those studying at the RAC or AIB, we had no resource with which to clarify whether these parts of our data were representative. The weight value for part-time/OU/RAC/AIB respondents was therefore set to 1. It is perhaps worth noting, here, that prior to weighting, *all* responses carry an equal weighting of 1. The weighting process either adds to or subtracts from this figure of 1 in order to address the kinds of biases described above. In the main, weight values will cluster about 1.

### **After weighting**

Having calculated the weight variable, it was necessary to assess whether we had been successful in minimising bias in the sample. Using the same key demographic variables we had used initially to check the sample for bias, we compared expected and observed proportions both with and without the weighting. These comparisons are shown in Table A4.3.

It is clear from Table A4.3 that the application of the weight variable addresses bias in both gender and subject categories. These are almost exactly in line with the expected values, meaning sample and population proportions are approximately identical (adding AIC and RAC makes only marginal difference). The proportions of white respondents to black/ethnic minority students are also very similar, revealing negligible bias. As had been planned during the organisation of the sample, expected and observed proportions of respondents per institution are also well matched. Plymouth and UWE are out of proportion, each by about four percentage points, but these biases were noted and taken account of during the research. On the whole, we felt satisfied that gender, subject, ethnic group and institution variables had been addressed by the weighting process.

As can be seen from Table A4.3, however, observed age group has not been so adequately addressed by the application of the weight variable. Broadly, the observed and expected proportions are comparable, but they are not as closely matched in proportion as we would have hoped. However, the 21-24 age band still represents the largest group, and the 'up to 20' band the smallest.

In conclusion, we are confident that our full time first degree respondent group is representative of the full time first degree leaving population from HERDA-SW member institutions. Therefore throughout the report, we can confidentially describe the experiences of South West recent full time first degree graduates. However, we should point out that we cannot describe the experiences of all part-time or open university/distance learners in the South West, as our sample was not designed to be representative. So when describing data relating to part-time or distance learners we are referring to our respondents only.

**Table A4.3: A comparison of expected and observed data, according to gender and course subject area\***

Subject	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Observed proportion (%)	Expected proportion (%)	Observed proportion (%)	Expected proportion (%)
Medicine	0.5	0.5	1.4	0.7
Health (including nursing)	0.2	0.7	2.2	2.6
Biological/physical sciences	5.3	9.0	8.7	9.1
Agricultural/veterinary sciences	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.9
Maths/IT	3.4	5.3	2.1	2.1
Engineering/Technology	6.0	6.3	1.2	0.6
Social studies (including law)	3.4	6.0	10.7	8.4
Business/admin. studies	6.1	6.6	12.9	6.9
Humanities ( <i>eg</i> English)	3.8	2.0	10.3	2.5
Languages	0.6	1.9	2.3	5.6
Creative arts/Media studies	4.0	4.7	7.9	6.1
Education	0.4	1.4	3.9	4.8
Other	0.3	2.5	0.5	1.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>34.9</i>	<i>47.7</i>	<i>65.1</i>	<i>52.3</i>

\* excluding data for part-time/OU/RAC/AIB respondents, and non first degree students, Also note that for legibility values are shown to one decimal place only

Source: IES/HESA First Destinations Survey, 1999/2000

**Table A4.4: Weight values by gender and course subject area\***

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		<b>Gender</b>	
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Subject</b>	Medicine	1.0	0.5
	Health (including nursing)	2.9	1.2
	Biological/physical sciences	1.7	1.0
	Agricultural/veterinary sciences	0.9	0.8
	Maths/IT	1.5	1.0
	Engineering/Technology	1.0	0.5
	Social studies (including law)	1.8	0.8
	Business/admin. studies	1.1	0.5
	Humanities ( <i>eg</i> English)	0.5	0.2
	Languages	3.5	2.4
	Creative arts/Media studies	1.2	0.8
	Education	3.5	1.2
	Other	9.6	4.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>0.8</i>

\* excluding data for part-time/OU/RAC/AIB respondents, and non first degree students, Also note that for legibility values are shown to one decimal place only

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Source: IES Survey, 2002

**Table A4.5: Expected and observed proportions before and after weighting**

		<b>Expected proportions (%)*</b>	<b>Observed proportions before weighting (%) *</b>	<b>Observed proportions after weighting (%) **</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	47.7	34.9	47.5
	Female	52.3	65.1	52.5
<b>Subject</b>	Medicine	1.2	1.9	1.1
	Health (including nursing)	3.3	2.4	3.3
	Biological/physical sciences	18.0	14.0	17.5
	Agricultural/veterinary sciences	1.8	2.2	3.0
	Maths/IT	7.4	5.5	7.1
	Engineering/Technology	6.9	7.2	6.7
	Social studies (including law)	14.4	14.0	14.0
	Business/admin. studies	13.6	19.0	13.4
	Humanities ( <i>eg</i> English)	4.5	14.0	4.4
	Languages	7.6	2.9	7.2
	Creative arts/Media studies	10.8	11.9	12.1
	Education	6.2	4.2	5.9
	Other	4.4	0.7	4.3
<b>Ethnic group</b>	White	95.9	95.3	95.1
	Black/ethnic minority	2.9	2.3	2.4
	Other	1.2	2.3	2.5
<b>Institution</b>	Bath Spa	2.8	4.4	3.5
	Bath	6.9	6.3	6.6
	Bournemouth	11.0	9.1	8.9
	Bristol	16.2	14.1	14.8
	Gloucestershire	7.1	8.0	6.9
	Dartington	0.5	0.7	0.6
	Exeter	12.1	10.5	11.3
	Falmouth	2.3	3.0	2.5
	Plymouth	19.1	23.2	23.7
	Marjon	3.2	3.5	2.7
	UWE	18.8	17.3	15.2
	<i>Arts Institute</i>			<i>1.8</i>
	<i>Royal Agricultural College</i>			<i>1.4</i>
<b>Age group on 31/8/02</b>	Up to 20	2.7	0.6	0.6
	21-24	82.3	86.0	86.0
	25-29	5.7	5.0	5.1
	30 and over	9.3	8.3	8.4

\* excluding data for part-time/OU/RAC/AIB respondents.

\*\* excluding data for part-time/OU respondents only

Source: IES/HESA First Destinations Survey, 1999/2000

## A4.4 The leavers interviews

A series of 40 half hour telephone interviews was undertaken with a sub-sample of final year first degree students from South West universities and colleges, in order to collect more qualitative information on career aspirations and potential employment choices.

The sample was drawn from respondents to the postal survey who had provided contact details and had indicated that they would be willing to participate in a further telephone discussion. One hundred subjects were identified to provide 40 interviews. The main criteria for selection was 'route' through higher education and into the labour market, and 25 each of SW Loyals, Lost SW Graduates, Incomers, and Returners were identified. However, care was taken to ensure a mix of gender, ages, subjects of study, and mode of study (full and part time), and that all institutions were represented in the sample and achieved interviews.

The interviews built upon information supplied by individuals in the postal questionnaire and followed a semi-structured discussion guide. The discussions covered:

- Studying in the South West – choices, expectations and experiences.
- Working in the South West – perceived options, actual choices and actions after studies.
- Career aspirations – setting and achieving career goals.
- Assessment of employability – actions taken, help received and help required.
- And finally how, if at all, the South West features in future plans.

The telephone interviews took place in August and September 2002 after the postal survey had closed.

The characteristics of 40 interviewees were as follows:

- Route: SW Loyal (10), Incomer (11), Lost SW Graduate (9), and Passer through (10).
- Mode of study: full time (34), and part time (6).
- Subject area: medicine (1), health (1), biological/physical sciences (4), agriculture/veterinary sciences (2), maths/stats/IT (3), engineering/technology (6), social studies (1), business/admin studies (3), humanities (5), languages (6) creative arts/media (6), and education (2).
- Institute studied at: Arts institute (1), Bath (3), Bath Spa (4), Bournemouth (4), Bristol (3), Dartington (2), Exeter (6),

Falmouth (1), Gloucestershire (2), Marjon (2), OU (6), Plymouth (2), RAC (2), and UWE (2).

- Gender: female (26) and male (14).
- Age: traditional age students (31), and older students (9).

## Appendix 5: The Graduates Surveys

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### A5.1 The postal survey

Taken six months after graduation, the First Destinations Survey looks at the immediate outcomes of HE. However, other surveys of new graduates' transitions into the world of work have found that this is a turbulent period in their career history (Connor *et al.* 1997 – What do Graduates do Next?) We therefore took the opportunity to run a small scale survey to look at career patterns and choices, approximately one year after graduation.

We sent out 550 questionnaires, on 1 July 2002, and received 291 responses by 19 August, following one reminder to non-respondents. There were 26 Post Office returns, and four inappropriates, giving a respectable response rate of 56 per cent.

The sample was drawn from respondents to two previous surveys of UCAS scheme participants that the Institute for Employment Studies ran in 1999 and 2001 (Connor H, *et al.*, 1999 and 2001a). Those included in our new survey:

- had made an application for a higher education course through UCAS in 1998, and
- were either from the South West or had attended a South Western HEI, and
- had replied to the previous two surveys and indicated that they would be happy to participate in future studies.

As such, the survey participants cannot be said to be a representative sample of HE participants.

In comparison with graduates taking part in HESA's First Destinations Survey, our survey is loaded in favour of women and high achievers (in terms of first class and 2i degrees). It contains a higher proportion of arts, humanities and language graduates, and a lower number of employees. However, the age and ethnicity profile is roughly in balance, and there was no evidence that respondents to our survey had a different personal profile to non-respondents. The characteristics of the Graduate Survey respondents are described in Table A5.1.

**Table A5.1: Profile of respondents to UCAS applicants survey**

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	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	31	90
Female	69	200
Not known	1	2
<b>Age</b>		
Aged 21-24 at 30 Sept 2002	83	241
25+	13	37
Not known	5	14
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	91	266
Black and minority ethnic	4	12
Not known	5	14
<b>Graduate type</b>		
SW Loyals	20	59
Lost SW Graduates	1	2
Lost SW students	22	65
Returners	19	54
Incomers	12	36
Passers through	16	48
Not known	9	27
<b>Institution</b>		
University of Bath	3	10
Bath Spa University	15	44
Bournemouth University	2	7
University of Bristol	7	20
UWE, Bristol	11	31
University of Gloucestershire	2	7
University of Exeter	5	14
Falmouth College of Arts	0	1
University of Plymouth	4	12
University College of St Mark & St John	1	2
Non-South Western HEIs	48	139
Unknown	1	4

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Source: IES Graduate Survey, 2002

Once identified, these imbalances in the sample are not a major concern. Rather than measuring numbers of graduates and their outcomes, the purpose of the survey was to explore how recent graduates make the transition from higher education to employment or other career destinations, compare their perceptions of the South West with those just about to embark on that transition, and finally, to identify graduates who may be willing to take part in the telephone survey of recent graduates.

#### **A.5.1.1 The graduate telephone survey**

For the IES graduate survey, 50 graduates were interviewed by telephone between August and September 2002. All graduates were currently working in the SW, and were 2-5 years into their careers. The 50 graduates represented a balance of SW Loyals, Returners, Incomers and Poached Graduates and where possible represented a range of ages, ethnicity, institution attended, subject studied and gender.

The sample was drawn from two main sources: about half were generated from sources recommended by HERDA-SW, such as alumni offices and graduate business programmes for specific universities, sectoral bodies, and careers services. The remainder were selected from a large IES dataset (Connor *et al.*, 1999) which was created in 1998 in order to survey students who were then at the application stage of the process; these graduates had all recently completed a short questionnaire about their experiences of living or studying in the SW and had agreed to take part in a short telephone interview to discuss, in more depth, some of the issues that were emerging from the study.

The telephone interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 30 minutes, and covered a wide range of issues related to their career experiences since graduation including:

- Transitions from University/college in terms of what institutions do and could do to help students get graduate jobs, and which initiatives or schemes were seen as being particularly helpful or useful. It also questioned whether students had undertaken any activities themselves which they felt useful for their employability, and asked whether there was any particular area in which they felt they needed more help.
- Intended career plans after graduation, covering whether graduates intended to take short-term temporary work, or go straight into a career, or other options such as further study. It questioned how realistic graduates' expectations were and also how location factored into their plans. (This was then compared with what the graduates actually did after their studies, and covered whether their expectations had been met).

- Career history since graduating, covering aspects such as the level of work undertaken, any career changes, the type of employer worked for, or whether work was self employed. Other options such as any learning activity undertaken, or any periods of unemployment were also covered.
- Views about the South West – *ie* how the SW is seen in terms of somewhere to live and work, perceived quality and quantity of available jobs, local career and employment support, and whether any initiatives or assistance would help to encourage graduates to stay in the SW.
- Finally, longer term career aspirations were examined and graduates were asked where they expected or hoped to be in terms of jobs, industries, salary expectations, levels of responsibility and location of work.