

Press release: Tuesday 10 March 2020

Women more likely to leave top jobs, reports Institute of Student Employers

A survey by the [Institute of Student Employers](#) (ISE) has found that retention is generally high across graduate (72%) and school leaver (75%) programmes after three years, but that there is a higher propensity to leave among certain groups¹ such as women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

In the [ISE Student Development Survey 2020](#) a quarter of firms reported that women are more difficult to retain than men once they have completed their initial training and development programmes.

Employers suggested that this is influenced by the image and culture of their sector, a lack of role models and because the entry-level hires do not believe that they can progress within the industry as well as reasons outside of their control such as the disproportionate likelihood of women taking on family and caring responsibilities.

ISE Chief Executive Stephen Isherwood said: “Despite all of the investment and resource spent on tackling the gender gap, women are still underrepresented across the graduate employment market. We know that female students are less likely to apply for graduate roles and are therefore underrepresented on early careers programmes. This now tells us that they are also less likely to stay in an organisation. To tackle disparity we must not only look at who gets in, but who gets on.”

Sarah Anderson, Graduate Recruitment Manager at [Newton Europe](#) added: “Recruitment is only half the battle to increase gender diversity and retention of women is a struggle for many organisations. To combat this we are improving our parental leave policy and working towards gender pay equality. We aim to ensure that women make up 30% of our leadership roles by 2023, rising to 40% by 2028.”

The ISE survey also reported that 17% of employers found people from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background more difficult to retain while 12% reported similar issues with those who had experienced mental health issues during their training programme and 7% found people with disabilities more difficult to retain.

On average firms reported that they retain over half (57%) of graduates compared to 69% of non-graduates after five years.

In general the survey found that while pay is an important factor, the main reasons that people leave are all related to career change and progression; either staff cannot find a way to advance their career within the firm or they find that they can advance their career more effectively elsewhere.

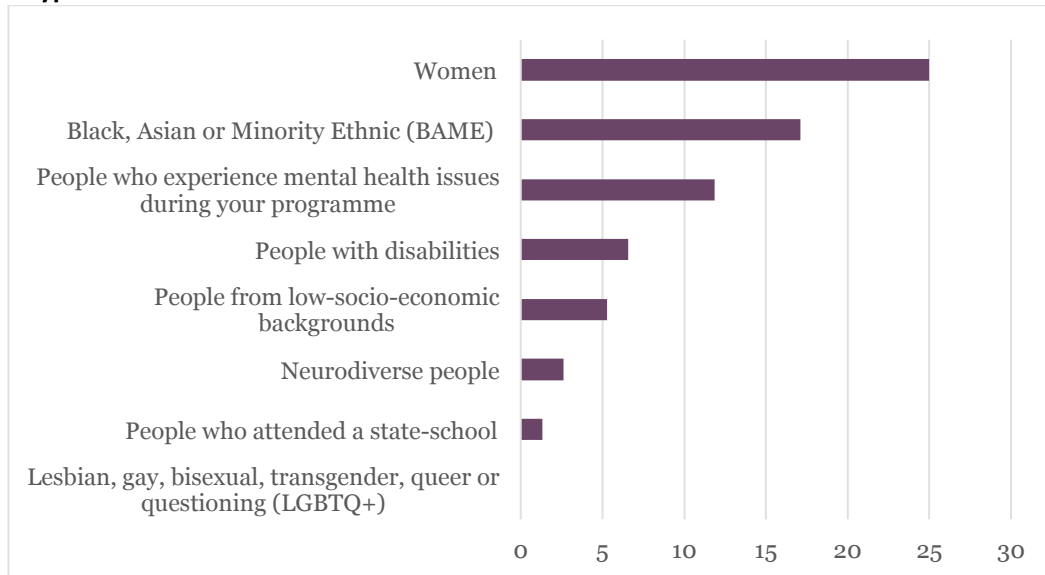
Stephen added: “While employers don’t want or expect to retain entry-level staff forever, as some degree of turnover is healthy, relatively high levels of retention are often indicative of job satisfaction and employee engagement. This is particularly important for student employers who are making substantial investments in the development of graduates and apprentices and hope to retain them until this initial outlay is recovered.”

Ends

Media enquiries, preview copy of the report and interviews:

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¹ Types of hire that firms find more difficult to retain



Notes to editors

ISE Student Development Survey 2020

ISE Student Development Survey 2020 is based on 133 responses from ISE members: large employers who are collectively employing over 20,000 entry-level staff every year. It explores how firms manage and deliver learning programmes for graduates and non-graduates (apprentices, school or college leavers) and looks at the skills that they need, feel are lacking and actively developing. It also examines how early career hires are retained and progressed and the key challenges faced by employers in developing them.

Institute of Student Employers

The Institute of Student Employers (ISE), [formerly the Association of Graduate Recruiters \(AGR\)](#), is an independent, not-for-profit member organisation that was established in 1968. As the UK's leading independent voice for student employers, ISE's vision is that every businesses success is maximised by full access to student talent. ISE achieves this by bringing together employers, the education sector and supplier partners, providing leadership and support in all aspects of student recruitment and development. ISE activities include:

- Promoting excellence and innovation in the resourcing, assessment and development of emerging talent including school leavers, apprentices and graduates
- Providing expert information and insight to ISE member organisations, creating engaged communities for professional networking and sharing of best practice
- Delivering comprehensive research on a range of issues affecting graduate, intern and apprenticeship recruitment and development, including current and future trends and benchmarking data
- Investing in the professional development of members to enhance their skills and knowledge, maximising their career opportunities within the profession
- Influencing key policy areas affecting student employment and the education sector
- Building a strong professional organisation with the right structure and team capabilities to deliver the services and support members require to fulfil their objectives

For further information:

- www.ise.org.uk
- Follow us @IoSEorg
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