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Graduate employers lower entry requirements to address diversity

Graduate employers setting no minimum entry grades have more than doubled in five years as they search for more diverse recruits, reports the Institute of Student Employers (ISE).

In 2014, 7% of ISE members set no minimum entry requirements for their graduate recruits, but this year that has increased to 22%.

In the same period, the proportion of employers requiring a 2:1 degree has dropped from 76% to 57%. The requirement for minimum A level grades (or UCAS points) has also declined, from 40% of employers to 16%.

[ISE Inside Student Recruitment 2019](#) also showed that the majority of companies (86%) don't look for a qualification in a particular subject and just 2% use postgraduate degrees as a minimum requirement.

Social mobility, the desire to create more diverse workforces and advances in recruiting technology are driving the trend. This year, firms were giving a higher priority to all diversity issues namely gender, ethnicity, social mobility, disability, LGBTQ+ and neurodiversity.

The majority of employers had also changed attraction and recruitment processes with 38% changing the universities they visit and 36% undertaking blind recruitment by removing the applicant's name or/and university.

Stephen Isherwood, Chief Executive of ISE said: "Over the last five years, we've seen the beginnings of a major shift in employers using grades to determine the best people for their organisations. Academic criteria are a crude measure of potential. Companies are becoming more sophisticated in how they use data and they have more tools to predict success.

"It's important not to overstate this trend though. With more than half of employers still using 2:1s as an entry requirement, qualifications remain important. But there are concerns that relying on grades alone raises diversity issues as well as a sense that they may be too broad a brush to successfully identify the people that employers are actually looking for."

Ends

Media enquiries

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Notes to editors

[ISE Inside Student Recruitment 2019](#)

ISE's annual student recruitment survey explores how employers are bringing young people into the labour market to gather the talent that they need to meet their skills and business requirements. The report presents data collected in July and August 2019 from 153 of the ISE's members. Employers had recruited 37,389 young people during the 2018/19 recruitment season, which were made up of 21,877 graduates, 6,218 non-graduates, 6,734 interns and 2,560 placement students. The findings are strongly indicative of the experience of larger employers who are recruiting skilled young people.

About the Institute of Student Employers (ISE)

ISE, formerly Association of Graduate Recruiters, is the recognised national voice for UK employers that recruit and develop graduates, school leavers, interns, placement students and apprentices. The independent, not-for-profit organisation has more than 750 members from both the public and private sectors, uniting employers with universities, colleges, schools and industry suppliers. ISE members represent some of the UK's [largest employers](#) such as John Lewis Partnership, Network Rail and Deloitte.

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