WHAT DO GRADUATES WANT? | 2018

A look at what 3,000+ Bright Network members want from their career and future employers
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We established Bright Network to help the world’s best companies find the talent they need to grow their businesses faster and enable the UK’s brightest graduates to discover great career opportunities.

By combining rich data, proprietary technology and analytics with extensive knowledge and insights, we create exceptional experiences, interactions and opportunities to connect students and their future employers.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

As part of our mission to provide better matchmaking between employers and graduates, we conducted this annual research in January 2018 to gain a greater understanding into what graduates think about their future career and what they look for in an employer.

We surveyed 3,000+ members of Bright Network. Where relevant, we have segmented data by gender, graduation year, ethnicity and background. All percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

KEY CONTACTS

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BRIGHT NETWORK STATS

150,000+
MEMBERS

85,000+
UNDERGRADUATES

25%
STEM

58%
FEMALE

40%
BAME

47%
MORE LIKELY TO GET HIRED THAN THE AVERAGE GRADUATE AT ASSESSMENT CENTRE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What do graduates want? is the only survey that seeks to understand more about the specific career preferences, concerns and ambitions of those studying across the UK’s top universities, breaking down the results by gender, graduation year and ethnicity where relevant.

• 52% of Bright Network members surveyed decided to attend university to improve their career prospects. 35% chose to attend as they had a passion for their degree subject.

• 49% of those surveyed do not feel or are unsure as to whether university is equipping them for the world of work.

• 49% of those surveyed are concerned by the level of debt they will have after they graduate.

• 90% of 2018 graduates will leave university with some work experience.

• 12% of final year graduates are either unsure as to what they will do after university or are still researching and considering their options.

• 58% of those surveyed expect to start a graduate job straight after university. 57% are confident about securing a graduate role.

• 41% of current undergraduates believe Brexit will have a negative impact on their job prospects.

• 39% of our LGBTQ+ community surveyed said that they did not feel they could pursue any career path they wish.

• Graduates see strong competition from other graduates, a lack of relevant work experience and a lack of network and contacts as the biggest barriers to pursuing any career path they wish.

• 6% of BAME students believe their ethnicity is the biggest barrier to pursuing any career path they wish, rising to 8% amongst BME students.

• 35% of those surveyed feel that their background has hindered them in an application for either work or academic study.

• Graduates look for companies that are fast growing and innovative, followed by financial success and inspiring management. They prioritise a friendly and respectable working environment and look for roles that offer professional training and development.

• The majority of students feel it is important to meet employers face-to-face before submitting an application.

• 61% of respondents are most likely to apply for graduate roles based in London.

• 88% of those surveyed would reject an offer they had already received for a better one – with 54% citing a more prestigious firm or a more exiting role as the main reasons for doing so. 15% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they would reject an offer in favour of another opportunity if they felt they had received a better experience during another application process.

• Respondents believe that the most important attributes an employer values in successful candidates are achieving a 2:1 or above and existing industry experience. In contrast, graduate employers say they look for candidates that have a passion for the business, good communication skills and are good at problem solving.
ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

3,109 TOTAL RESPONSES

- **47%** BAME
- **18%** BME
- **65%** Female
- **9%** LGBTQ+
- **78%** State-educated
- **7%** Disability/learning difficulties
- **43%** Bilingual

GRADUATION YEAR

- **2018**: 33%
- **2019**: 32%
- **2020**: 26%
- **2021**: 8%
- **2022**: 1%

TOP 20 UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED BY RESPONDENTS

- University of Warwick
- Durham University
- University College London (UCL)
- University of Oxford
- Queen Mary University of London
- University of Cambridge
- University of Bristol
- London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
- University of Exeter
- University of Kent
- King’s College London
- University of Birmingham
- University of Manchester
- University of Nottingham
- University of York
- Imperial College London
- University of Leicester
- University of Southampton
- University of Bath
- University of Leeds

BY GENDER & ETHNICITY

- **Female**
  - 44%
  - 20%
  - 14%
  - 8%
  - 8%
  - 4%
  - 2%

- **Male**
  - 47%
  - 19%
  - 12%
  - 3%
  - 3%
  - 2%

- **BAME**
  - 48%
  - 20%
  - 11%
  - 9%
  - 6%
  - 4%
  - 1%

BY GRADUATION YEAR

- **2018**
  - Applying for internships/work experience: 22%
  - Applying for graduate jobs: 8%
  - Researching & considering my options: 46%
  - I’ve secured a graduate job: 7%
  - I really have no idea what I want to do: 1%

- **2019**
  - Applying for internships/work experience: 22%
  - Applying for graduate jobs: 8%
  - Researching & considering my options: 46%
  - I’ve secured a graduate job: 7%
  - I really have no idea what I want to do: 1%

- **2020+**
  - Applying for internships/work experience: 15%
  - Applying for graduate jobs: 2%
  - Researching & considering my options: 9%
  - I’ve secured a graduate job: 57%
  - I really have no idea what I want to do: 1%
THE GENDER GAP

Our research looks at the differences between male and female responses. We highlight some of the key findings below.

- Women are 36% more likely than their male peers to be unsure as to what to do after university.
- Women are more likely than men to feel that university is either not preparing them for the world of work or they are unsure as to whether it is.
- Men are 45% more confident than women about securing a role after they graduate and are 14% more confident about pursuing any career path they wish.
- Female undergraduates are 24% more likely than their male peers to cite a firm’s people and culture as the most important factor when choosing a graduate role, whereas men are 33% more likely to select remuneration and advancement as the most important factor.
- When it comes to rating their skills, men on average score themselves more highly than women and most notably put their ability to problem solve at the top of their skills list. In contrast, women score themselves more highly on communication, organisation and time management.
- Both men and women think their weakest qualities and skills are confidence, negotiation & persuasion and commercial awareness.
- Women are 56% more likely than their male counterparts to abandon an application because they have lost confidence in their ability to get the role.
- Men are 40% more likely than women to cite that earning a lot of money as the biggest measure of success five years after graduating.
- Men expect a starting salary of £29,279. In contrast, women expect £25,832. When asked about their salary expectations for five years after they graduate, the gap increases further with women expecting an annual salary of £47,492 and men looking for a salary of £60,521 – a difference of 27%.
- Women are 24% more likely than men to say that competition from other graduates is their biggest barrier to success.
- Women are 40% more likely than men to have undertaken part-time work during term time, but 16% less likely to have undertaken a Spring Week or Internship.
- Women are 23% more likely than men to feel their background has hindered them.
To understand more about our members’ expectations around university, we asked three key questions – what was the most important factor in deciding to attend university; what matters most while you are at university and whether you have gained any work experience whilst at university.

1. What was the most important factor for you in deciding to attend university?

- To improve my career prospects: 52%
- I had a passion for my degree subject: 35%
- It’s just what you do: 3%
- My family/school encouraged me to attend: 3%
- Other – specify: 1%

Women are more likely than men to say that passion for their degree subject is why they chose to attend university.

Men are 6% more likely than women to cite that improving their career prospects is the main reason for attending university.

2. What’s most important to you while you’re at university?

- Achieving a top grade: 31% (All), 32% (Female), 31% (Male), 31% (BAME)
- Securing a graduate role: 30% (All), 30% (Female), 31% (Male), 31% (BAME)
- Gaining work experience: 23% (All), 22% (Female), 22% (Male), 22% (BAME)
- Taking part in extracurricular activities: 17% (All), 17% (Female), 17% (Male), 17% (BAME)

3. Respondents were asked to select one option.
4. Respondents were asked to rank the four options in order of importance.
3. Have you gained any work experience while at university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>BAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internship/Spring Week</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placement as part of my course</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Day</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual vacation work</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work during term time</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13% of those surveyed have a work placement as part of their course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internship/Spring Week</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placement as part of my course</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Day</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual vacation work</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work during term time</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the time they reach their final year, over half of undergraduates will have done either a formal internship or Spring Week.

38% of those surveyed have undertaken part-time work during university term time.

Females are 40% more likely than their male peers to have undertaken part-time work during term time.

27% of men said they had not gained any work experience whilst at university – 35% more than their female counterparts.

10% of 2018 grads will leave university with no work experience at all.

By the time they reach their final year, 44% of 2018 graduates have undertaken part-time work during term time compared with 30% of those graduating in 2020+.
To understand how confident undergraduates feel are about their future we asked them a series of questions about their plans straight after they graduate, whether they feel their time at university is equipping them to enter the world of work and if they are confident about securing a role once they finish. We also asked our members whether they feel Brexit will have a negative effect on their job prospects.

1. What do you plan to do straight after finishing university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start a graduate job</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure yet</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further study</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17% of undergraduates remain unsure as to what they will do after university.

The majority of undergraduates surveyed [58%] expect to start a graduate job straight after university.

Women are 36% more likely than their male peers to be unsure as to what to do after university.

13% of 2018 graduates still don’t have any idea what they want to do when they finish university.

1. Respondents were asked to select one option.
2. Do you feel your time at university is equipping you to enter the world of work?

49% of those surveyed are either unsure or do not feel that university is equipping them for the world of work.

- **Yes**: 51%
- **Not Sure**: 25%
- **No**: 24%

**BY GENDER & ETHNICITY**

- **FEMALE**: 48%
- **MALE**: 28%
- **BAME**: 22%

Women are 16% more likely than men to feel that university is either not preparing them for the world of work or are unsure as to whether it is.

**BY GRADUATION YEAR**

- **2018**: 49%
- **2019**: 50%
- **2020+**: 54%

49% of those surveyed are either unsure or do not feel that university is equipping them for the world of work.

3. Are you confident about securing a graduate role after university?

- **2018**: **YES** 54%
- **2019**: **YES** 55%
- **2020+**: **YES** 60%

Students graduating in 2020 or later are 11% more confident about securing a graduate job than those in their final year of university.

Men are 45% more confident than women about securing a graduate role after university.
4. Do you think Brexit will have a negative effect on your job prospects after graduating?

![Survey Results](chart.png)

41% of current undergraduates believe Brexit will have a negative impact on their job prospects.

4. Respondents were asked to select one option – Yes, No, Not Sure.
WHAT HOLDS GRADUATES BACK?

We asked our members questions about their confidence in pursuing any career path they wish and compared this with responses given to the same question two years ago. We asked them what they feel are the biggest barriers to their future career success and whether they have ever felt hindered by their background.

1. Do you believe you can pursue any career path you wish?

**ALL – YES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THIS YEAR</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO YEARS AGO</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our results show that the majority of students today feel more confident about their future prospects than they did two years ago. However, 32% of those surveyed still do not feel they can pursue any career path they wish.

**FEMALES – YES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THIS YEAR</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO YEARS AGO</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Men are 14% more confident than women to pursue any career path they wish.

**MALES – YES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THIS YEAR</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO YEARS AGO</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BAME students and those whom have been educated privately appear to be more confident about their ability to pursue any career path.

**ALL – YES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THIS YEAR</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO YEARS AGO</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61% LGBTQ+

66% STATE

70% PRIVATE

71% BAME

39% of our LGBTQ+ community surveyed said that they do not feel they could pursue any career path they wish. This is noticeably higher than the overall average of 32%.

61% LGBTQ+

66% STATE

70% PRIVATE

71% BAME

As they progress through university our results suggest that students begin to feel their options narrow. This might be because they become more specialised and focused or it could be that they develop greater awareness about what’s possible and the skills and knowledge required to pursue certain routes.

1. Respondents were asked to select one option – Yes or No.
2. What is the biggest barrier to pursuing any career path you wish?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALL RESPONSES</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong competition from other graduates</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of relevant experience</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of network/contacts</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t think my degree is relevant</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sector/career knowledge</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic factors, e.g. Brexit</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ethnicity</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My economic background</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of role models</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My gender</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women are 24% more likely than men to say that competition from other graduates is their biggest barrier to success.

In contrast, men are 13% more likely than their female peers to cite a lack of relevant experience as a barrier to future success.

Less than 1% of female students believe gender is their biggest barrier to pursuing the career they choose.

Students who attended a state-school are 11% more likely than average to feel that a lack of network/contacts is their biggest barrier to pursuing their chosen career path.

6% of BAME students believe their ethnicity is the biggest barrier, rising to 8% for BME students.

Women are 24% more likely than men to say that competition from other graduates is their biggest barrier to success.

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6% of BAME students believe their ethnicity is the biggest barrier, rising to 8% for BME students.
3. Have you ever felt your background has hindered you in an application process for work or academic study?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAME</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women are 23% more likely than men to feel their background has hindered them.

Students from a BME background are most likely to feel they have been hindered by their background.

Our research indicates that ethnicity is more of a perceived issue than that of social mobility and gender. BME students are 34% more likely than average to feel that their background has hindered them.

3. Respondents were asked to select one option – Yes or No.
Women are 36% more likely to be unsure what to do after university than men.

1. Respondents were asked to select one option.
We asked our members a series of eight questions designed to understand what’s most important when applying for a graduate role and what they look for specifically in a future employer. We asked them what is most likely to put them off applying for a particular firm and whether it is important to meet representatives from a company in advance of submitting an application.

1. What do you plan to do straight after finishing university?

**ALL RESPONSES**

- Start a graduate job: 58%
- Not sure yet: 17%
- Further study: 17%
- Travel: 7%
- Other: 1%
- Volunteer: 1%

**FEMALE**

- Start a graduate job: 56%
- Not sure yet: 19%
- Further study: 7%
- Travel: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Volunteer: 1%

**MALE**

- Start a graduate job: 62%
- Not sure yet: 14%
- Further study: 5%
- Travel: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Volunteer: 1%

**BAME**

- Start a graduate job: 62%
- Not sure yet: 16%
- Further study: 15%
- Travel: 4%
- Other: 1%
- Volunteer: 1%

**BY GRADUATION YEAR**

- 2018: 61%
- 2019: 58%
- 2020+: 55%

1. Respondents were asked to select one option.
2. What is most important to you when choosing a graduate role?

**The firm’s people & culture**
- Remuneration & advancement within the firm
- The firm’s reputation & image
- The role’s characteristics

**Remuneration & advancement**
- Female undergraduates are 24% more likely than their male peers to cite a firm’s people and culture as the most important factor when choosing a graduate role.
- Men are 33% more likely than women to select remuneration and advancement as the most important factor.

**People & culture**
- BAME students are 13% more likely than average to think the characteristics of the role are most important when it comes to choosing a graduate role.

**Reputation & image**
- Women are 24% more likely than their male peers to select remuneration and advancement as the most important factor.
- Men are 33% more likely than women to select remuneration and advancement as the most important factor.

**Role’s characteristics**
- 2018 graduates are 17% more likely to say that the firm’s people and culture is the most important factor compared with those graduating in 2020 or later.

**Last year respondents**
- 22% Remuneration & advancement within the firm
- 36% The firm’s people & culture
- 17% The firm’s reputation & image
- 26% The role’s characteristics

---

2. Respondents were asked to select one option.
3. When it comes to a graduate employer’s reputation & image, what’s most important?

- Exciting Products & Services: 13%
- Corporate Social Responsibility: 13%
- Prestige: 15%
- Financial Success: 17%
- Fast Growing & Innovative: 24%
- Inspiring Management: 17%

Graduates look for companies that are fast growing and innovative, followed by financial success and inspiring management.

4. When it comes to a graduate employer’s people & culture, what’s most important?

- Creative & Dynamic Work Environment: 18%
- Friendly & Respectable Work Environment: 32%
- Flexible Work Conditions: 11%
- International Firm: 10%
- Recognising & Rewarding Achievement: 20%
- Championing Diversity: 8%

32% of those surveyed prioritise a friendly and respectable working environment.

YEAR ON YEAR STATS

- Exciting Products & Services: 13%
- Corporate Social Responsibility: 15%
- Prestige: 14%
- Financial Success: 18%
- Fast Growing & Innovative: 24%
- Inspiring Management: 16%

3. Respondents were asked to select one option.
4-7 (pages 19-21) Respondents were asked to select three options. The results were collated and calculated into a percentage popularity score based on how many respondents had scored them in first, second and third place.
5. When it comes to graduate job characteristics, what’s most important?

- Challenging work: 17%
- Team-orientated work: 9%
- High level of responsibility: 11%
- Opportunities for international travel/relocation: 15%
- Professional training & development: 29%
- Secure employment: 18%

YEAR ON YEAR STATS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging work</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-orientated work</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of responsibility</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international travel/relocation</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional training &amp; development</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. When it comes to renumeration & advancement, what’s most important?

- Clear path for advancement: 29%
- Competitive base salary: 21%
- Competitive benefits: 10%
- High future earnings: 20%
- Overtime pay/compensation: 4%
- Sponsorship of future education & professional qualifications: 15%

YEAR ON YEAR STATS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear path for advancement</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive base salary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive benefits</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High future earnings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime pay/compensation</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship of future education &amp; professional qualifications</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. What is most likely to put you off applying to a firm?

- Negative stories in the media: 11%
- Reports of redundancies: 14%
- Long and complicated application process: 15%
- Negative feedback from trusted friends and family: 17%
- Poor/unimpressive experience when meeting representatives from the firm: 25%
- Lack of available information: 10%
- Perceived lack of diversity: 8%

The survey reveals that respondents are most likely be put off applying for a graduate employer if they feel they have had a poor or unimpressive experience when meeting representatives from that firm.
8. How important is it to meet a firm’s representatives before applying for a role with them?

Our research shows that the majority of students feel it is important to meet employers face-to-face before submitting an application. 82% of students feel it is either very or quite important to meet representatives from a firm before submitting an application. This highlights the importance and value of meeting students who are in the early stages of their university career.

82% of students feel it is either very or quite important to meet representatives from a firm before submitting an application.

BY GENDER

Female: 52% Very important, 19% Quite important, 29% Not that important
Male: 36% Very important, 46% Quite important, 18% Not that important

BY GRADUATION YEAR

2018: 28% Very important, 49% Quite important, 23% Not that important
2019: 34% Very important, 50% Quite important, 16% Not that important
2020+: 34% Very important, 51% Quite important, 15% Not that important

85% of 2020+ graduates think it’s important to meet a firm representatives before applying. This highlights the importance and value of meeting students who are in the early stages of their university career.

8. Respondents were asked to select one option
9. When a firm says it supports diversity and inclusion, how do you interpret this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>BAME</th>
<th>BME</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>NON STATE</th>
<th>LAST YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I really don’t know</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It believes a diverse workforce is the most effective</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has a diversity quota</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has an inclusive culture</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It primarily wants to meet candidates from minority groups</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – specify</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26% of BME students surveyed believe that supporting diversity and inclusion means a firm has a diversity quota.

9. Respondents were asked to select the most relevant one option from six. If they selected the ‘other’ option respondents were given a free text box for their answer.
We presented our members with a list of nine skills and asked them to rate themselves out of 10 for each one.

We compared this year’s results with those from 2017 and look at the key differences between how men and women rate their different skills.

1. How would you rate yourself in these skills in order of ability?

### ALL RESPONSES THIS YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1ST</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>8.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ND</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3RD</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>7.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4TH</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>7.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5TH</td>
<td>Organisation &amp; time management skills</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6TH</td>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>7.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7TH</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH</td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; persuasion</td>
<td>6.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9TH</td>
<td>Commercial awareness</td>
<td>5.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ALL RESPONSES LAST YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1ST</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ND</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3RD</td>
<td>Organisation &amp; time management skills</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4TH</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5TH</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6TH</td>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7TH</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH</td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; persuasion</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9TH</td>
<td>Commercial awareness</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Each respondent was asked to rate themselves out of 10 for each skill, 1 being the lowest, 10 the highest. The average of these scores is displayed above.
On average, men score themselves more highly across a range of skills compared to women. They place problem solving at the top of their skillset list, whereas women believe their strongest skills are teamwork, communication and resilience.

### FEMALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>8.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>7.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organisation &amp; time management skills</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>7.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; persuasion</td>
<td>6.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Commercial awareness</td>
<td>5.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>8.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>8.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>7.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organisation &amp; time management skills</td>
<td>7.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>7.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; persuasion</td>
<td>6.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Commercial awareness</td>
<td>6.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>8.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>7.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organisation &amp; time management skills</td>
<td>7.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; persuasion</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Commercial awareness</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMLOYER & CANDIDATE PERCEPTIONS

We asked our members what they think graduate employers value most in candidates. We then asked 157 graduate employers across a range of companies and sectors, what they value most in graduate candidates.

We presented both our members and employers with the exact same list of 11 qualities. The results are shown below.

1. What do you think graduate employers value most in candidates?

2. What do you value most in graduate candidates?

Graduate employers and survey respondents were asked to select their top three out of the eleven.
There are key differences between what graduates think employers value in candidates compared with what they actually do.

Candidates think that employers value achieving a 2:1 or above and gaining existing industry experience over other factors.

In contrast, the survey reveals that employers place greater importance on qualities such as problem solving and resilience.

With resilience featuring on the bottom of the students’ list of valued attributes, it suggests that more needs to be done to inform candidates about what employers are really looking for from their future hires.
APPLYING FOR A GRADUATE ROLE

To understand more about how undergraduates approach the application process we asked them a series of nine questions. Ranging from the information they require before making an application, to the total number of applications they make and whether they would reject an offer they had previously accepted, our findings are shown on the following pages.

1. Where are you most likely to apply for a graduate role?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m open to any location</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad/International</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The area I grew up</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near the university I attended</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other UK city</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

London tops the list as the destination of choice for starting a graduate career.

2. What information do you want to see from employers before you apply for a role?

- Details about the graduate/internship roles available: 36%
- Information about training and development: 20%
- Salary & remuneration information: 16%
- Guidance on the application process: 14%
- Interviews and advice from recent graduate recruits: 11%
- How to contact the recruitment team for support: 3%

1. Respondents were asked to select one option. They were given a free text box if they selected ‘other UK city’.
2. Respondents were asked to select their top three options. The results were collated and calculated into a percentage popularity score based on how many respondents had scored them in first, second and third place.
3. When applying for insight days, internships or graduate programmes, on average how many applications do you submit?

48% of those surveyed submit 2-6 applications.

19% of BAME students will submit over 16 applications.

3. Respondents were asked to select one option.
4. When applying for insight days, internships or graduate programmes, how many applications do you abandon?

The majority of undergraduates surveyed will submit most of the applications they make. 43% of students said they abandon very few and 14% said they would not abandon any.

4. Respondents were asked to select one option.
5. What’s the main reason you have usually given up on an application?

The application process was unclear, too long or too hard
- **45%**

I realised it wasn’t the right role for me
- **23%**

I lost confidence in my ability to get the role
- **22%**

Other
- **6%**

Don’t know
- **4%**

**BY GENDER & ETHNICITY**

Women are **56%** more likely than their male counterparts to abandon an application because they have lost confidence in their ability to get the role.

- **FEMALE**
  - The application process was unclear, too long or too hard: **44%**
  - I realised it wasn’t the right role for me: **21%**
  - I lost confidence in my ability to get the role: **25%**
  - Other: **6%**
  - Don’t know: **4%**

- **MALE**
  - The application process was unclear, too long or too hard: **45%**
  - I realised it wasn’t the right role for me: **28%**
  - I lost confidence in my ability to get the role: **16%**
  - Other: **7%**
  - Don’t know: **4%**

- **BAME**
  - The application process was unclear, too long or too hard: **46%**
  - I realised it wasn’t the right role for me: **19%**
  - I lost confidence in my ability to get the role: **26%**
  - Other: **6%**
  - Don’t know: **3%**

BAME students are **18%** more likely than average to abandon an application because of confidence.
6. If you receive an email about a great internship/graduate opportunity, what are you most likely to do?

- Digest the email & then apply: 53%
- Read the email but possibly forget to apply: 23%
- Click through to the job description & apply immediately: 17%
- Ignore the email – I get too many: 5%
- Don’t know: 2%

**FEMALE**
- Digest the email & then apply: 51%
- Read the email but possibly forget to apply: 25%
- Click through to the job description & apply immediately: 16%
- Ignore the email – I get too many: 4%
- Don’t know: 3%

**MALE**
- Digest the email & then apply: 58%
- Read the email but possibly forget to apply: 17%
- Click through to the job description & apply immediately: 17%
- Ignore the email – I get too many: 6%
- Don’t know: 2%

**BAME**
- Digest the email & then apply: 54%
- Read the email but possibly forget to apply: 21%
- Click through to the job description & apply immediately: 20%
- Ignore the email – I get too many: 4%
- Don’t know: 2%

Women are 47% more likely than men to read the email but possibly forget to apply for the role.

6. Respondents were asked to select one option.
7. When you see the deadline on a role you want to apply for, what do you do?

- I make sure I submit my application in good time: 47%
- I work to the deadline and submit my application close to that date: 33%
- I apply for the role as quickly as possible, regardless of the deadline: 17%
- Don’t know: 2%
- Other: 1%

8. How long do you spend on each application?

- Up to one hour: 24%
- Up to 2 hours: 23%
- Up to 3 hours: 27%
- Up to 4 hours: 26%
- More than 4 hours: 24%
- Don't know: 4%

A quarter of those surveyed will spend over four hours on an application.
9. If you had already accepted an internship or graduate role offer, what would make you reject this in favour of another opportunity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>BAME</th>
<th>LGBTQ+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More exciting role</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More prestigious firm</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigger salary</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better experience during the other application process</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better location</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular communication with recruiters</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining bonus</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wouldn’t reject an offer I had accepted</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

88% of students would reject an offer they have already accepted for a better one.

54% of those surveyed will reject a role either for a more prestigious firm or a more exciting role.

14% of graduates would consider rejecting an offer they’ve already accepted for financial reasons.

LGBTQ+ students are 67% more likely than average to reject an offer because they have received a better experience during the application process for another role.

12% those surveyed said they would not renege on an offer they had already accepted.

9. Respondents were asked to select one option out of the ten choices given, including ‘I wouldn’t reject an offer I had accepted.’
We asked our members two questions about their future. Firstly, how long they envisage staying with their first employer and secondly, what success would look like five years after graduating.

1. How long do you plan to stay with your first/graduate employer?

- Less than 1 year: 1%
- 1-2 years: 10%
- 2-5 years: 32%
- 5 years+: 31%
- I don’t know: 24%

Almost a third of students are unsure how long they will stay with their first graduate employer.

42% of graduates are looking to stay with their graduate employer for at least 2 years, with 10% anticipating 5 years +.

1. Respondents were asked to select one option.
2. Five years after you graduate, what would career success look like to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>BAME</th>
<th>LGBTQ+</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a good balance between my personal and professional life</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I earn a lot of money</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm contributing to a cause I believe in</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm in a leadership position</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've successfully completed professional qualifications</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've started my own business</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women are 19% more likely than men to cite work life balance as the biggest measure of success five years after graduating.

Work life balance is important for our LGBTQ+ members.

2. Respondents were asked to select one option.
1. What is your expected basic annual salary in your first job after graduating?

- **£27,437**
  - **ALL**

2. What is your expected basic annual salary in five years after graduating?

- **£53,023**
  - **ALL**

***FINANCIALS & SALARY EXPECTATIONS***

A look at salary expectations and concerns over the levels of student debt.

Male graduates expect 13% more than females as a starting salary.

Privately schooled graduates expect a starting salary that's 10% higher than those who attended a state school and 8% more than the average.

5 years after graduating, males expect a 27% bigger salary than females.

Graduates who attended a private school expect to earn 15% more than those who attended a state school five years after graduating.

1 & 2. Respondents were asked to enter a figure for their expected salary. To calculate the respected averages, 10% of the highest and lowest answers were removed.

The remaining figures were then used to calculate the averages stated above.
3. Are you concerned by your level of debt when you graduate?

- Yes: 49%
- No: 31%
- I don’t have any student debt: 13%
- Not sure: 7%

Female undergraduates are 18% more likely to be worried about levels of debt after university than males.

16% of BAME students don’t have any student debt.

Respondents were asked to select one option.
APPRENTICESHIPS

In the wake of the apprenticeship levy and increased investment in degree apprenticeships, we asked our members two questions to gain a greater insight into their thinking regarding apprenticeships.

1. Did you receive any information from your school about apprenticeships as a potential career route rather than university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/Can’t remember</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just 28% of 2018 grads were told about apprenticeships, compared to 49% of 2020+ grads.

2. Did you consider an apprenticeship as an option?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>BAME</th>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th>STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No I didn’t</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – but I didn’t apply</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wasn’t sure so preferred to apply to university</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – I applied</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18% of current undergraduates considered an apprenticeship.

1. Respondents were asked to select one option.
2. Respondents were asked to select one option.
What’s the worst careers advice you have received?

WE ASKED OUR MEMBERS TO TELL US ABOUT SOME OF THE WORST CAREERS ADVICE THEY HAVE RECEIVED

We share some of their responses below

- Choose a big salary even if you don’t enjoy what you’re doing
- In today’s job market, you should accept that you’ll have to work unpaid for an employer for a period of time before they actually pay you
- I wouldn’t apply for investment banking, you have to be ruthless. *(This advice came from a family member who has no experience in banking and has never met anyone in the industry)*
- Your degree dictates your career
- That I am not suited to a career in finance because I come from a computer science background
- To not bother applying for large competitive firms as I had taken time out of university due to mental illness
- To let the jobs come to you
- I was told to give up because I was aiming too high
- That consulting is not a serious industry

7% of those surveyed stated advice that encouraged choosing money and a higher salary over enjoyment of the role was the worst they had ever received.

Respondents were given a free text box in which to share their experiences.
A selection of the worst careers advice women have received

- Women are best suited to be teachers
- To disregard the sexism that will ensue if you really want the job
- That I should wear heels to every law firm because I am a woman
- That I can’t become a lawyer whilst wearing a headscarf
- That I should rethink my plans as I will struggle to gain respect as a woman in science
- Don’t go into technology because it’s a male-dominated field and you won’t fit in
- Don’t take up a role that’s too time consuming or challenging so that you have more time for family later in life
- Flirt with the male interviewers

Respondents were given a free text box in which to share their experiences.
Inappropriate interview questions

WE ASKED OUR MEMBERS TO TELL US WHETHER THEY HAD EVER FELT THEY HAD BEEN ASKED AN INAPPROPRIATE QUESTION AT INTERVIEW

We share some of these questions below

- Do you drink alcohol?
- Can you tone down your accent?
- Why are you wasting your time in finance when you have a face like yours?
- So, I take it you don’t read the Guardian?
- I think mental health is a little whiny, what do you think?
- Are you married?
- We thought from your name that you were a man. Do you always mislead people with your name?
- Would someone like you from a small town be able to fit into this prestigious firm in London?
- Are you thinking of getting married soon because married women are likely to quit sooner rather than later?

Respondents were given a free text box in which to share their experiences.
Respondents were given a free text box in which to share their experiences.

WE ASKED OUR MEMBERS TO SHARE SOME OF THE TOUGHEST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS THEY HAVE FACED

- Create an algorithm to make a sandwich
- How many golf balls are in the air at one moment?
- How would you put a giraffe in a fridge?
- How many lawyers would it take to screw in a lightbulb?
- What makes you cry?
- What would you do with an elephant if you couldn’t give it away or sell it?
- If you could be a piece of furniture in this room, what would you be?
- If you were to take the CEO somewhere for the day, where would you take him/her and why?
- Do you believe in the Loch Ness Monster?
- Look at this handbag. Describe the kind of person you think owns it.