

Exploring the career change conundrum: a survey on behalf of *Get Into Teaching*

Introduction

Kindred Agency, in partnership with SKV Communications, commissioned research company Censuswide to carry out a survey on behalf of the *Get Into Teaching* campaign, asking the general public about their inclination and motivation for changing careers, specifically at the start of a new academic year.

The purpose of the survey was aimed at gaining further insights about those considering a career change, and what might propel them to do so. Findings from the survey were used to inform campaign development and marketing, in particular public relations activity to position teaching as an opportunity for those looking for a fulfilling and rewarding career change option. Press releases based on the main survey findings were proactively shared with target national and regional media for publication. These releases included information about how those considering a career in teaching can find out more.

Methodology

The research was conducted by Censuswide in accordance with the [MRS Code of Conduct \(2014\)](#) between 14th June 2019 – 3rd July 2019. The aim was to gain responses from 2,000 of the general public aged 16+ (excluding teachers, retirees and those not looking for work), the final response rate was 2,092. Respondents were asked a set of single answer and multi-answer questions. All responses were gathered using an online survey and recruited via a random and anonymous sample selection, from an online “double opt-in” panel (where all eligible respondents are required to answer the demographic screening questions again to take part in the survey) of the general public in England. When referring to the general population and respondents in the report, teachers, retirees and those not looking for work were excluded from the sample.

The Censuswide panel was originally recruited via sampling specialists and since has grown organically. Panellists can opt to answer all surveys but will be filtered out if a survey is not relevant to them. Panellists are also invited to participate in surveys via a newsletter. Censuswide employs members of the [Market Research Society](#) and its research activity abides by the [ESOMAR](#) principles.

The way this survey was built meant that respondents were asked a number of preliminary screening questions to gather their demographic data, which could be used to analyse the data. This demographic data included age, gender, work status, city and region.

Questions for respondents explored the following topics and themes:

- How happy people feel in their current career or job role.
- Whether they have ever questioned the suitability of their current career or job role, how often and the most likely causes.
- How September makes them feel when it comes to their career, and what this month symbolises for them.
- Whether people make career plans in line with the academic year.
- The most important elements to people when it comes to their career or job role.
- If their current career or job role lives up to their original career aspirations and expectations.
- What would be the factors people would look for in a new career if they were to switch.
- What are the timescales people work to if they are considering changing careers.
- The main attractions of a career in teaching, and the experience people have of helping children or young people to learn.

As we are working with a 3.09% margin of error (and a 95% confidence interval), if the research were to be repeated with the same sample, we would expect the percentages to differ no more than 3% either way from the current results data.

Summary findings

Respondents were asked how happy they are in their current job or career, based on a scale of one to 10 (with 1 being not at all satisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied). Slightly more than 2 in 5 respondents selected 8-10 on the scale and just over 1 in 5 chose 9 and 10. When asked if they ever question the suitability of their career or job role, 17% said yes (all the time), 40% said yes (sometimes), 26% said no (not really) and 15% said no (not at all). Three per cent of respondents stated that they didn't know.

Of all respondents, the factors most likely to cause them to question their current career or job role were as follows: the level of pay (33%), feeling stressed (30%), lack of fulfilment (24%), lack of progression (21%), losing the love for the work they do (19%) and boredom (18%). There were 6% of people in the full sample who felt there were no particular factors that would make them most likely to consider a career change. When we analysed the answers of those who had answered yes to Q2 (do you ever question the suitability of your current career or job role?), the factors most likely to cause them to question their current career or job role were as followings: the level of pay (78%), feeling stressed (71%), lack of fulfilment (64%), lack of progression (55%), losing the love for the work they do (41%) and boredom (43%). These percentages are the sum of the percentages of respondents who said: "yes all the time" and "yes sometimes" when asked Q2: "Do you ever question the suitability of your current career/job?".

Respondents were asked what other factors make them question their current career or job, and they answered as follows: a bad day (36%), wanting a change or new start (31%), a tricky boss (28%), comparing their job to other people's jobs (26%), after a period of long or extra hours (22%), following a holiday (15%), a project not going to plan (14%), or the end of the summer (8%). There were 11% of people who said there were no other factors that made them question their current career or job role, and 2% stated "other" as their answer.

Respondents were asked how often they questioned their current career or job role, and the research found 13% said every day, 15% said once a week, 11% said every two to three weeks and 12% said every month.

Respondents were asked to rate how the month of September made them feel compared to other months in the year. Eighteen per cent said September made them feel positive (18%), optimistic (15%) and reflective (13%). Others said September made them tired (12%), motivated (11%), anxious (11%) and focused (11%). Thirty-three per cent of people stated that September didn't make them feel any different to other months of the year; Respondents were also asked what September symbolises or represents for them, when it comes to their career or job. Twenty two per cent felt it symbolised getting back into a routine, 17% said it was time to focus their energy after a summer holiday, 16% said it was an opportunity to set new goals, and 15% felt it was a time for making new plans. Forty per cent felt it didn't symbolise anything in their career.

When respondents were asked if they made any career plans in line with the academic year, starting in September, 16% stated they did as their children returned to school, 14% agreed with this as their job was linked to the academic year, and 12% said they did as this was still wired in them from their years in education. Additionally, 10% said that they did this because the end of the summer was a good time to make career plans. Fifty-six per cent said they did not make career plans in line with the academic year. The research also explored how the "back to school buzz" in September made respondents feel, with 20% stating that it took them back to their school days, and 15% said it made them compelled to learn something new at this time. Fourteen per cent of respondents said that they were envious of the opportunity of a new start, the same amount (14%) were keen to organise some life admin, whilst 13% said that they were encouraged by the return to routine. Forty-four per cent said that the "back to school buzz" didn't make them feel anything.

The research explored the most important elements for respondents when it came to their job roles or careers, and job security – enjoying a high probability that you will remain employed in a stable role – came out top with 45% of respondents stating that this was the case. Alongside this, 34% said the working environment (being in a positive place with positive people), 31% said a competitive salary, 27% said fulfilment (a role that helps to make a difference to the local community), 19% said recognition (receiving attention or recognition for the work they do), and 16% said balance (having adequate time away from work and/or extended leave).

Respondents were asked to consider the time when they were deciding on their current job or career, and if their current career or job situation lived up to their expectations. Seventeen per cent said yes all of the time, 48% said yes sometimes, 22% said no not really, 7% said no not at all, and 6% said they didn't know. When asked if they were to change job roles or careers, what they would want in a new one, 33% said they would want to be able to use the skills they have already built up over the years, and 31% said long term prospects. Alongside this, 29% said the ability to switch careers fairly easily, 26% said personal development opportunities, 26% said to be supported through the transition process into a new career, and 23% said being able to work closer to home. There was also 23% of respondents who said for a new career to fit around established elements of their life (e.g. where they live and childcare), and 20% said to be able to give something back to community and society. There were 10% of the respondent sample who said there is nothing they would want from a new career, and 4% said they would never look to change career.

In terms of timescales, respondents were asked if they were thinking about changing careers at some point, when would they have in mind. In answer to this question, 10% said within three months, 10% said in more than three months up to six months, 15% said in more than six months up to a year, 14% said in more than one year up to two years, and 7% said in more than two years up to three years. Some respondents stated longer than this time period and 32% didn't know.

Respondents were questioned about what they thought were the main attractions to teaching as a career. Thirty three per cent said the ability to shape the lives of the next generation, 25% said a stable and long-term career, 24% said that holidays that fit in with the family, 23% stated the variety of the job in that no two days are the same, 23% thought teaching to be a true profession, and 21% said the emotional fulfilment of knowing the impact you have had on students. Furthermore, 19% felt it was a flexible career that you could take anywhere, 17% felt it was a fresh start at the beginning of each academic year, and 17% felt it offered lifelong learning and development. Twenty-three per cent felt there were no main attractions to teaching as a career.

Respondents were also asked what experience they have helping children and young people to learn. In response to this, 36% said they had their own children, 23% said they had helped a relative with their homework, 18% said when looking after family members, 14% said volunteering at a local club and another 14% said they looked after children. There were 28% of respondents who stated that they didn't have any of this type of experience.

The city-based statistical variations report:

City-based data	Birmingham	Bradford	Brighton	Bristol	Hull	Leicester	Leeds	Liverpool	London	Manchester	Newcastle	Nottingham	Norwich	Oxford	Sheffield	Southampton
Respondents – full sample	169	102	104	106	105	103	109	102	413	153	108	107	100	101	103	107
Respondents who say they question the suitability of their current job or career	58%	57%	61%	61%	51%	61%	61%	64%	55%	52%	51%	51%	53%	56%	57%	61%
Respondents who state that they question their current job role or career once a week or more	50%	43%	48%	52%	51%	49%	36%	44%	45%	42%	38%	37%	40%	45%	52%	36%
Respondents who question the suitability of their current job role or career, citing lack of fulfilment as one of the most likely causes	48%	42%	79%	74%	87%	42%	74%	73%	68%	70%	33%	55%	94%	56%	58%	51%
Respondents who rank job security – being able to enjoy a high probability that they will remain employed in a stable role – among the top factors when considering their career	41%	42%	45%	42%	59%	53%	51%	47%	35%	42%	60%	44%	46%	51%	50%	45%
Respondents who say they would seek long-term prospects if they were to change career	27%	29%	31%	32%	41%	34%	39%	40%	27%	31%	33%	25%	24%	36%	40%	28%
Respondents who cite some of the main attractions to teaching as having the ability to shape the lives of the next generation	28%	30%	31%	33%	40%	38%	33%	31%	30%	31%	29%	38%	33%	41%	35%	31%
Respondents who cite some of the main attractions to teaching as offering a stable and long-term career	24%	23%	25%	27%	35%	19%	26%	29%	19%	29%	28%	24%	16%	25%	34%	32%
Respondents who cite some of the main attractions to teaching as having holidays that can fit around family life	18%	23%	26%	29%	29%	29%	33%	24%	18%	22%	18%	28%	24%	32%	28%	30%
Respondents who feel that September symbolises a time to re-focus their energy again after the summer	16%	14%	13%	15%	11%	19%	24%	13%	18%	20%	19%	12%	14%	18%	21%	16%

Respondents who feel that September symbolise a time to set new goals	22%	21%	14%	16%	8%	16%	18%	12%	20%	14%	14%	14%	13%	14%	15%	15%
Respondents who feel that the end of the summer is a good time to make career plans	9%	9%	13%	14%	10%	12%	8%	8%	8%	9%	15%	10%	12%	7%	4%	11%
Respondents who cite “following a holiday” when asked what else causes them to question their career	18%	23%	9%	15%	12%	15%	13%	11%	15%	18%	13%	12%	18%	12%	12%	19%
Respondents who cite “the end of the summer” when asked what else causes them to question their career	10%	9%	12%	10%	7%	7%	5%	5%	8%	11%	9%	4%	5%	3%	6%	7%

The regional statistical variations report:

Regional-based data	East of England	Greater London	East Midlands	West Midlands	North East	North West	South East	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber
Respondents – full sample	181	248	234	186	110	247	364	161	361
Respondents who say they question the suitability of their current job or career	53%	60%	58%	53%	52%	53%	55%	65%	58%
Respondents who state that they question their current job role or career once a week or more	44%	50%	45%	44%	38%	42%	40%	51%	45%
Respondents who question the suitability of their current job role or career, citing the lack of fulfilment as one of the most likely causes	87%	68%	48%	57%	41%	64%	60%	66%	67%
Respondents who rank job security – being able to enjoy a high probability that they will remain employed in a stable role – among the top factors when considering their career	43%	34%	49%	40%	58%	47%	45%	40%	52%
Respondents who say they would seek long-term prospects if they were to change career	28%	28%	28%	27%	33%	34%	31%	30%	39%
Respondents who cite some of the main attractions to teaching as having the ability to shape the lives of the next generation	31%	31%	35%	30%	32%	31%	34%	31%	35%

Respondents who cite some of the main attractions to teaching as offering a stable and long-term career	12%	20%	25%	24%	30%	29%	23%	34%	29%
Respondents who cite some of the main attractions to teaching as having holidays that can fit around family life	22%	14%	29%	21%	17%	25%	26%	29%	29%
Respondents who feel September symbolises a time to re-focus their energy again after the summer	17%	21%	13%	15%	19%	17%	15%	17%	19%
Respondents who feel September symbolises a time to set new goals	15%	22%	15%	20%	15%	15%	13%	16%	15%
Respondents who feel the end of the summer is a good time to make career plans	10%	9%	9%	12%	14%	9%	10%	13%	7%
Respondents who cite "following a holiday" when asked what else causes them to question their career	15%	14%	14%	14%	14%	15%	13%	18%	16%
Respondents who cite "the end of the summer" when asked what else causes them to question their career	6%	12%	6%	8%	8%	8%	5%	11%	7%