

Student and graduates career aspirations & what it takes to teach: a survey on behalf of *Get Into Teaching*

Introduction

Kindred Agency commissioned research company Censuswide to carry out two surveys on behalf of the *Get Into Teaching* campaign – one to explore the career aspirations of students and recent graduates, and alongside this a survey asking teachers to cite the key attributes they believe are needed to do their job and the aspects of teaching they believe would most appeal to new recruits.

For students and recent graduates, the purpose of the survey was also to provide insights about the qualities and skills they most possess, as well as what they most hope to gain when considering a future career, including teaching. For the teacher survey, the purpose was to understand what attributes and skills they believed to be most useful for being a teacher, the best aspects of their job and what it enables them to do. 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 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 \(2019\)](#) between 21st January 2020 – 7th February 2020. The aim was to gain responses from 2,000 current university students and those who have graduated in the last 18 months (excluding teachers and trainee teachers), and 1,000 current teachers under the age of 40. These were the final response rates. 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.

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 these surveys were 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 group, gender, work status, city and region.

Questions for **student and recent graduate respondents** included a range of topics and themes:

- What attributes or qualities they think they most possess, as well as what skills and traits they hope to gain from a future career
- Which attributes or qualities they think they would most need to succeed in a future career
- Which career sectors they think serve the most important roles in society
- What they believe a career in teaching could offer them
- The effect of technological developments in the workplace and skills they could bring to their future career

Questions for **teacher respondents** also included a range of topics and themes:

- What they believe are the best aspects of their job, as well as the attributes or qualities they believe help the most in doing their job well
- What a career in teaching most enables them to do, and what skills and traits they have developed
- What has surprised them most about teaching and what they believe someone can experience or gain from joining the teaching profession
- How technology has helped teaching and learning
- Which key skills and characteristics they believe are needed for a career in teaching and the reasons why they would recommend it to others

In both surveys, we are working with a 3.09% margin of error (and a 95% confidence interval), which means that 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

Students and recent graduates

Respondents were asked what attributes or qualities they think they most possess as a person: 29% said confidence; 29% said determination and 28% said creativity. Other attributes cited included a good sense of humour (28%); empathy (27%); patience (27%) and a caring nature (27%). Asked what they most hoped a future career would enable them to do, 35% said a career that would help them to continue to break new ground and push boundaries; 34% said a career that helps them to know they are making a difference in the world; 33% said a career enables them to feel a sense of pride when they tell someone what they do; and 31% said they want a career that enables them to use their personality and individuality at work. Alongside this, 31% want a career that enables them to see the positive difference they make; and 30% of respondents want a career to enable them to have long-term prospects.

When asked what skills and traits do they most hope to gain when considering their future career, respondents cited: confidence (39%); leadership (39%); being agile with the ability to think on their feet (37%); communication (37%); motivation (36%); good time management (36%); an understanding of different people and their personalities (35%); and patience (33%).

The research asked respondents what sectors they think serve the most important roles in society: 35% said healthcare; 34% cited teaching and education; 31% environment and agriculture; and 28% social care. On which career they felt would be most likely to allow their individually and personality to shine through in the workplace, respondents cited a range of sectors including teaching and education (34%). Other sectors were business, consulting and management (27%); social care (26%); engineering and manufacturing (26%); healthcare (25%); creative arts and design (25%); marketing, advertising and PR (25%).

Respondents were asked, when considering their future career, what attributes or qualities they think they would need the most to succeed: determination (29%); a problem solver (28%); confident (27%); a strong work ethic (27%); patient (27%); caring nature (26%); creative (26%); and resilient (25%).

Turning to teaching as a career, respondents were asked what they thought they would most stand to gain from the profession. Respondents said: knowing their job is helping to positively shape the lives of others and their own (46%); a sense of purpose by doing something that matters (42%); an opportunity to work in an exciting and dynamic environment (37%); a sense of being needed by someone else (36%); and a sense of responsibility (35%).

The theme of technology was also explored, and respondents were asked if they felt the development of technology would have a positive or negative effect on the workplace. In response to this, 32% said they think it will have a very positive impact; 43% said it will have a somewhat positive impact; and 22% said they didn't think it would have a positive or negative impact. 3% of respondents felt it would have a negative impact¹. Respondents were also asked what technology skills they think they could bring to their future career: 52% said an understanding of how technology can aid creativity; 51% said how to use technology to help to streamline processes, making work more efficient; 40% said digital presentation skills; 39% said an understanding of social media, and 35% said an understanding of coding.

The city-based statistical variations report²:

City-based data	Birmingham	Bradford	Brighton	Bristol	Hull	Leicester	Leeds	Liverpool	London	Manchester	Newcastle	Nottingham	Norwich	Oxford	Plymouth	Sheffield	Southampton
<i>Number of respondents per city in the overall sample</i>	100	101	100	99	100	101	100	101	401	100	100	100	100	100	97	100	100
Respondents most hope a future career will enable them to know they are making a difference in the world.	35%	36%	37%	25%	35%	46%	34%	34%	31%	35%	33%	34%	28%	40%	38%	32%	33%
Respondents most hope a future career will enable them to feel a sense of pride when they tell people what they do.	40%	45%	25%	36%	43%	23%	27%	32%	32%	31%	46%	37%	23%	31%	33%	37%	24%
Respondents who believe teaching and the education sector serves one of the most important roles in society.	41%	32%	34%	40%	25%	24%	28%	39%	33%	25%	40%	32%	36%	25%	44%	63%	25%
Respondents who believe confidence is one of the qualities or attributes they most possess.	33%	22%	38%	30%	15%	30%	29%	35%	32%	29%	17%	36%	34%	39%	30%	13%	25%
Respondents who believe determination is one of the qualities or attributes they most possess.	30%	25%	26%	29%	26%	33%	30%	35%	30%	21%	24%	31%	31%	33%	28%	28%	20%

¹ Combining respondents who selected 'somewhat negative impact' and 'very negative impact'

² The city demographic question asks respondents which city they live in, or closest to, from this list of cities

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
<i>Number of respondents per region in the overall sample</i>	375	280	97	114	269	218	171	293	183
Respondents most hope a future career will enable them to know they are making a difference in the world.	36%	30%	38%	30%	34%	33%	39%	31%	36%
Respondents most hope a future career will enable them to feel a sense of pride when they tell people what they do.	31%	29%	35%	39%	37%	37%	25%	31%	38%
Respondents who believe teaching and the education sector serves is one of the most important roles in society.	25%	33%	44%	43%	47%	29%	37%	37%	27%
Respondents who believe confidence is one of the qualities or attributes they most possess.	34%	31%	38%	33%	21%	26%	35%	30%	16%
Respondents who believe determination is one of the qualities or attributes they most possess.	33%	27%	30%	31%	29%	26%	32%	25%	23%

Teachers

Respondents were asked, when thinking about their career in teaching, what were the best aspects of their job: 35% said being able to share their knowledge and passion for a subject with others; 33% said knowing their job positively shapes them as a person; 33% said knowing they are helping to shape the lives of the next generation; 29% said being able to teach in their own way; and 29% said the lightbulb moments, witnessing someone understand or learn something new because of them. The teachers surveyed were also asked what attributes or qualities they think most help to do their job well: 31% said patience; 30% said a caring nature; 29% said creativity; 29% said confidence; and 29% said determination.

Respondents were asked what a career in teaching most enables them to do and answers included: knowing they are making a difference in the world (43%); being able to use their personality and individually at work (42%); being able to see the positive difference they make (41%); feeling a sense of pride when they tell someone what they do (39%); and enabling them to be creative at work (38%). Teachers were also asked what skills and traits they have developed from being a teacher, and respondents answered: patience (39%); confidence (39%); motivation (37%); communication (37%); good time management (36%); and leadership (35%).

When respondents were asked, for anyone considering a career in teaching, what they think other individuals can experience or gain from joining the teaching profession: 43% said a sense of responsibility; 41% said an opportunity to work in an exciting and dynamic environment; 41% knowing your job is helping to positively shape the lives of others; 41% said the feeling of being valued and trusted in your school; and 40% said a sense of purpose, doing something important that matters. In addition to this, respondents were asked, for anyone considering a career in teaching, what they believe are the main characteristics or skills needed to be a good teacher: 50% said a passion for learning - being able to motivate students through your enthusiasm for a particular student or topic; 47% said a flair for communication with young people - striking up a rapport with different kinds of students with different needs; 47% said emotional intelligence, being empathetic; and 46% said a creative mind, being able to effectively engage students in learning.

Respondents were asked to think back to when they decided to be a teacher, what surprised them the most about teaching: 43% said there is more creativity in teaching than they expected, they thought it would be more rigid; 40% said there is more variety in teaching than expected, students can be unpredictable; 40% said the pressure they put on themselves to perform well; 39% said there is more autonomy in teaching than they expected, you manage your own classroom/lessons; and 39% said there is a greater sense of responsibility in teaching than they first thought, enabling pupils' success.

The teacher respondents were asked how they thought technology has improved teaching and learning in the classroom: 50% said it has helped them to be more creative in their lessons; 48% said it has helped them to tailor their teaching to suit their students' personalities; 48% said it makes the work more efficient; and 47% said it helps them to engage students. 1% felt technology has not improved teaching and learning. Respondents were asked to what extent they think an understanding of technology will be important for future teachers: 62% said very important, 37% said somewhat important and 1% said not very important.

Respondents were asked the kind of people they would recommend teaching to as a career to: 33% said those people who want to make a difference; 31% said those who enjoy the buzz of working with children and young people, 31% said those who want a challenge; 30% said those who are looking for variety in their role; 30% said those who are passionate about a subject; and 30% said those who want autonomy in their day-to-day role.

Respondents were asked how rewarding it is to teach a subject they like/love everyday: 58% said very rewarding and 40% said somewhat rewarding. 2% said not very rewarding, and fewer than 1% said not rewarding at all. Respondents were also asked how they engage young people in the subject they teach: 41% said they reward good work and personal achievements from students; 39% said they try to making learning as interactive as possible; 39% said they try to keep lessons as high energy as possible; 37% said they encourage questions from students; and 37% said they try to make learning as relevant to their lives as possible.

The city-based statistical variations report:

City-based data	Birmingham	Bradford	Brighton	Bristol	Hull	Leeds	Leicester	Liverpool	London	Manchester	Newcastle	Norwich	Nottingham	Oxford	Plymouth	Sheffield	Southampton
<i>Number of respondents per city in the overall sample</i>	50	50	49	50	51	50	50	50	201	50	50	51	50	50	50	51	51
Respondents felt confidence was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	30%	40%	22%	42%	18%	32%	28%	32%	28%	28%	20%	27%	30%	28%	22%	31%	29%
Respondents felt determination was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	36%	30%	36%	30%	39%	36%	22%	30%	30%	26%	38%	20%	20%	24%	16%	24%	25%
Respondents felt patience was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	28%	28%	24%	30%	27%	24%	40%	14%	40%	28%	32%	31%	28%	36%	24%	37%	31%
Respondents felt a caring nature was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	30%	26%	33%	48%	24%	28%	20%	28%	37%	28%	26%	27%	20%	44%	32%	10%	20%
Respondents who cited knowing they are making a difference in the world, among the things teaching most enables you to do	56%	62%	44%	32%	35%	42%	40%	46%	38%	34%	46%	39%	48%	52%	48%	43%	43%

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
<i>Number of respondents per region in the overall sample</i>	207	118	115	51	102	141	77	140	49
Respondents felt confidence was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	33%	27%	18%	31%	31%	35%	22%	29%	20%
Respondents felt determination was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	20%	33%	30%	33%	31%	32%	29%	25%	39%
Respondents felt patience was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	33%	44%	28%	27%	23%	31%	30%	29%	31%

Respondents felt a caring nature was one of the attributes or qualities that most helped them to do their job as a teacher well.	28%	38%	29%	22%	23%	26%	36%	35%	24%
Respondents who cited knowing they are making a difference in the world, among the things teaching most enables you to do.	43%	35%	44%	49%	55%	40%	43%	44%	41%