Students working while studying
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Students working while studying
1. Introduction

NASES (National Association of Student Employment Services) has worked with job shops throughout England to provide a comprehensive overview of the sector and to compliment the NUS work on the Pound in your Pocket (2011) research conducted earlier this year.

NASES was established in July 1999, it aims to facilitate the continuing development of the sector, encourage interaction between practitioners, share best practice and represent its membership on a national level. The association arose from the desire of practitioners to share expertise, provide mutual support and participate in national agendas. As the professional body for the sector NASES has a unique relationship with student employment services and therefore the opportunity to tap into their professional knowledge in this area.

NASES conducted a survey of student employment professionals to gain an overview of their experiences, supported by more in-depth information gathered at the regional think tanks and telephone interviews.
Executive Summary
2. Executive Summary

Harnessing the expertise from job shop professionals running university and college student employment services in England the following observations have been made:

1. The student employment sector is still developing, the first service to support students looking for part-time, temporary and vacation employment opened in 1990. Today there are over 110 job shops throughout the UK, 75 based in England.

2. Job shops have seen an increase in student usage throughout 2011/2012.

3. As well as the use of Job shops personal job search press, internet job boards and word of mouth, friends/family are the most popular way for students to find out about work opportunities.

4. The average number of vacancies a service advertises depends on its operating method but on average its over 1,000.

5. The most popular sectors advertising work via job shops are hospitality and retail in terms of volume of vacancies but the job shops work hard to source course related employment opportunities.

6. While no job shop advertises vacancies below the National minimum wage threshold, over 35 per cent use the higher rate as a minimum regardless of age, variations in pay rates were noted between internal and external employment.

7. Students’ Unions were the most popular places for opportunities on campus, 86 per cent following by advertising for work in careers and employability Academic departments, Catering and the Library.

8. When working with employers, 60 per cent make some charges for services, most common charge is for attending jobs fairs while 16 per cent run agency style services, acting as a temporary employment agency and charging clients for student services.

9. Difficult for services to evaluate academic impact of part time work, but overwhelming consensus that work brought considerable positive benefits provided there is a work/study balance.

10. Large amount of support available via job shops to help students combine work and study including limits on hours worked, provision of information materials, advice and guidance, workshops, employability programmes and awards.

11. This report highlights a significant increase in the number of approaches made by employers offering unpaid work opportunities and in turn their rejection from job shops, a 69 per cent increase since last year.
Methodology
3. Methodology

The experiences of student employment professionals in job shops were obtained using an online survey which was sent to job shops in England, a response rate of 90 per cent was achieved (Appendix 1). Services based in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales were not surveyed due to the research remit and varying socio-political factors as the areas differ in character, economy and indeed financial support system from nation to nation.

Owing to the different way in which the job shops operate and the data they collect not all respondents were able to answer all questions, however on average most questions were answered by two thirds of respondents. Where estimated figures are given these are based on informal practical knowledge of the sector.

Anecdotal information to support the data collected through the online survey and to cover topics which could not be obtained through the online survey was gathered though a combination of think tanks held at NASES regional meetings and one to one interviews. The think tank areas for discussion were piloted with job shops from the midlands region prior to use.

In addition a small online survey of placement officers was undertaken in order to obtain their views regarding whether students who were on placement also worked part-time. Job shops were unable to provide this information as it is largely managed elsewhere in the institution.

All quotes and information provided has remained anonymous.

The full on-line questionnaire and think tank topics is included in Appendix 3 and 4.
Research findings
4. Development of the student job market

The exact number of students working in the UK is unknown, recent reports estimate over 60 per cent take some form of paid employment while they are studying, most regard working on a part time basis or during the holidays as a fact of life. In order to support students who are working most universities have invested in specialist student employment services or Job Shops to help students find work. The first Job Shop opened in 1990 and there has been steady growth ever since, today there are over 110 services at Universities and colleges throughout the UK.

There have been many changes in the education sector since 1963. Summer work has increasingly become popular but 20 years ago as the overall trend from elite to mass higher education progressed so did the support to help students acquire formal and informal work experience.

1. Formal work experience opportunities (internships, work shadowing, mentoring etc) tend to shrink in recessions and thus the institution’s links with local employers can help maintain a supply of such work experience opportunities: placement tutors may need support from senior management.

2. Informal work experience opportunities (primarily part time work during term time). Job shops (and employment services are valuable resources to students seeking paid employment to support their time at university.

As the cost of education has grown, the justification for this funding from the public purse has been challenged and the costs transferred to individuals. At the same time, the rationale for expansion has been justified in economic terms: that the knowledge economy needs highly skilled workforce, the resulting focus is placed on individual benefits in terms of earning and learning.

These factors come together as students work while attending university both to reduce student debt and as a means to develop their own work based skills; the acquisition of work experience has long been a differentiating factor when it comes to graduate employment decisions. There are many business benefits to student work experience which employers have identified including their availability, attitude, skills for the job and the option to continue their employment after graduation.

The Impact of work on study has long been debated but with the increased prominence on student/graduate finance and employability institutions and students Unions have to turn this reality into a virtue.
5. Overview of the student job market

a. Who uses job shops?

Utilising UCAS (2010) figures we can estimate that 1.7 million students have access to an on-campus job shop, however it is less easy to identify how many students use the service and are successful in gaining employment. The NASES student employment survey 2011 identified a huge range in the numbers registered, from 200 registered students using the service to in excess of 20,000 registered students.

Most job shops have seen an increase in all types of students they support, when asked about the numbers and types of students who have used their service in the last academic year, not all services were able to answer these questions, 76 per cent could, and of those which did 75 per cent provided estimated figures.

b. Finding temporary, part-time and vacation work

While usage of job shops has increased other methods are employed by students to secure part-time, temporary and vacation work. Personal job search methods and word of mouth were ranked highest, followed by already established links such as transferring jobs with an employer they were already working for at home prior to moving to start their studies. Previous employment can lead to further opportunities with the same employer, such as switching between vacation work and part-time during term time, or obtaining part-time work following a placement. However it’s fair to say that when looking for part-time work students will employ a variety of job search methods in order to secure the most appropriate work experience.

Table 1. Changes to student use of job shops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>Stayed the same</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First year</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third year</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth year</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgrads</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home students</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU/EEC</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Vacancies

Number of vacancies – adverts and positions

The NASES student employment survey 2011 showed the highest number of vacancies advertised was over 14,630 at one institution, with 54 per cent recording job vacancy numbers in excess of 1,000.

As part of the online survey job shops were asked about the number of vacancies they had advertised during the current academic year. Owing to the variation in the working practices and systems used not all job shops were able to answer this question. Of those which were able to not all could provide actual figures, a slight majority, 53 per cent, were only able to give estimated figures, the other 47 per cent provided actual figures. In addition some could only provide figures for the number of adverts placed rather than the number of positions. In such cases an advert for 10 bar staff, for example, would only count as 1 rather than 10 positions.

Twenty five job shops were able to provide actual figures for the number of adverts totalling 17,393. Eleven job shops provided actual figures for the number of positions advertised totalling 55,220.

Nineteen job shops provided estimated figures for adverts placed totalling 15,700. Fifteen job shops provided estimated figures for the positions advertised so far this academic year totalling 33,000.

For all job shops which provided actual and estimated data the total figure for adverts placed is 33,088 and the total figure for positions is 83,220.

Vacancies by sector

Job shops were asked about the number of adverts placed and positions in different sectors. The comments from job shops regarding this question were mixed even within a region indicating that increases or decreases in a particular sector were not consistent across a region. For example within the North West one job shop reported a general drop in vacancies, whereas another had seen an increase in part-time work. The location of the institution can have an effect on the types of local jobs available, for example in tourist areas job shops can struggle to get non-tourism jobs because of the local economy.

Owing to the wide variety in the way that job shops operate and the data they collect only twenty five job
Students working while studying

Other sectors identified by specific job shops were: Admin 151 positions, Call centres 1,700 positions, Media/music/research/security/admin 400 positions, Leisure, sport, arts and entertainment 195 positions, and various/miscellaneous 3,855.

Based on the number of adverts and the number of positions job shops were asked to identify the most popular job titles. Retail and sales was mentioned most with roles such as customer service assistant, sales assistant and retail assistant; marketing roles were mentioned by several job shops and also care workers by a couple of job shops. As might be expected the hospitality sector figured highly due to the volume of vacancies available with roles such as waiting and bar staff, chef and front of house. On-campus roles such as student tutor, student helper, open day helper and ambassador were all mentioned, course related

As can be seen from the charts there is no direct similarity between the sectors when ranked by the number of adverts when compared with the ranking by the number of positions advertised in the same sector. However this could be due to the fact that in the majority of cases the job shops were unable to provide accurate figures regarding the number of positions they advertise, only 3 provided actual numbers while 13 provided estimated numbers of positions.
employment is sought and secured by job shops yet volumes are much lower.

Sources of vacancies

Job shops were asked to rank which type of employer advertised most vacancies in each of the various sectors. Except for Public sector and Charities, local SMEs were selected as being the source of most vacancies. As would be expected Charity and voluntary organisations was ranked top as the source for charity vacancies, and the Public sector for Education and teaching roles. In most sectors, excluding Public sector and Charities, local SMEs were selected as being the source of most vacancies. As would be expected Charity and voluntary organisations was ranked top as the source for charity vacancies, and the Public sector for Education and teaching roles.

d. Recession

The recession has had a big impact in the last academic year with 60 per cent of services indicating an increase in student usage and 45 per cent seeing a decrease in the number of part time vacancies being advertised. The highest increase, almost 70 per cent, was seen in the number of approaches to job shops from employers with unpaid placement opportunities (see Table 2).

e. Rates of pay

All job shops use the National Minimum Wage (NMW) as a baseline for accepting job advertisements, over half impose the age appropriate NMW rate of £4.98 for 18–20 years old and £6.08 for 21 and over, while 35 per cent impose the higher level rate regardless of age, and one service based in the south east imposes a flat pay rate above the higher level NMW.

Job shops were also asked about the different pay rates for internal (university/college) and external vacancies. As can be seen in Table 3 the typical internal pay rate is £7.00 – £7.99 per hour, while the typical external pay rate is lower at £6.00 – £6.99 per hour.
Table 2. Effect of the recession on the student job market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>Stayed the same</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students registering</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacancies advertised</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of one-off short term vacancies</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of part-time jobs</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacation jobs</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of unpaid work experience or internship positions</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instance of employers using students instead of recruiting permanent staff</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of self-employed vacancies</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of commission only vacancies</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacancies rejected as unsuitable</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries for student jobs</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General employer engagement/participation</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Do you impose the national Minimum wage for the vacancies you advertise? Please indicate as appropriate

Table 3. Typical rates of pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay rates</th>
<th>Typical internal (no of job shops)</th>
<th>Typical external (no of job shops)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than £4.99 per hour</td>
<td>1 (FE)</td>
<td>1 (FE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5.00 – £5.99 per hour</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£6.00 – £6.99 per hour</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£7.00 – £7.99 per hour</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than £8.00 per hour</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When comparing university/on-campus rates, student union rates and external pay rates during the current academic year university/on-campus rates 43 per cent of job shops reported an increase, closely followed by 41 per cent reporting that external rates had remained the same. However it should be noted that a considerable number of job shops did not know this information.

Comments from job shops included:

“There is a difference, worth noting, between student pay rates offered by the Students Union and the University. The Student Union average pay is £6.42 per hour. The average pay from the University is £7.90 per hour”. A job shop based in a students’ union.

“Higher pay rates for more specialist work (this applies to both internal and external vacancies). For example, language translation opportunities paying £10-£15 per hour.”
6. Types of work undertaken

Job shops were asked about the types of vacancies which they advertised: one-off short-term work, intermittent work with the same employer, regular part-time work and vacation work. When looking at all of the vacancies job shops advertise one-off short-term work and regular part-time work were the most heavily advertised at 86 per cent each; followed by vacation work at 77 per cent and intermittent work with the same employer at 74 per cent. This included internal/on-campus vacancies and those which were with external employers. When looking specifically at internal/on-campus vacancies and vacancies with external employers the pattern was similar, more details are below.

a. On-campus vacancies

When job shops were asked to consider internal/on-campus vacancies only, regular part-time work was highest at 90 per cent; followed by one-off short-term work at 88 per cent, vacation work at 78 per cent and intermittent work with the same employer at 68 per cent.

Job shops were specifically asked where students worked on-campus. They were presented with a number of options as indicated below.

Other departments identified by job shops included Student Support, Museum and Gallery, Teaching and Learning and Shops.

Table 4. On-campus part-time work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Union</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers and Employability Service</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Departments</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/ Communications</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Recruitment and Admissions Office</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Office</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widening Participation</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing Services/IT</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Management</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Department</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Office</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Team</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. External employers

When asked about external/off-campus vacancies one-off short-term work was highest at 89 per cent, regular part-time work at 84 per cent; followed by vacation work at 78 per cent and intermittent work with the same employer at 77 per cent.

Job shops were also asked whether they charged employers for any of the services which they provide to them, and if so which were charged services. A significant number, 39 per cent, do not make any charges to employers, the service which most job shops charge for is for attendance at careers/recruitment/job fairs at 49 per cent. Individual job shops mentioned charges for room hire for interviewing, for events for part-time or summer.

Figure 7. Do you charge employers for any of the services you offer? Please tick all that apply.

![Figure 7](image)

### c. Summer vacation work

Whether the summer vacation has an impact on whether students work, and what types of work are available to them was investigated through the online survey and the think tanks. A small number of job shops, 4 per cent, reported that they were not open during the summer vacation; none of these were based in the students’ union.

In general, through the online survey, job shops indicated that the availability of work over the summer decreases, 42 per cent reported a reduction in the number of jobs available. However the majority, 55 per cent, indicated that the quality of the work stayed the same.

Figure 8. Number of job shops reporting changes to the following factors during the summer vacation.

![Figure 8](image)
same while 14 per cent reported that it increases. When drilling down to regional and institutional levels through the think tanks a huge variation can be found.

The location of the institution has a large impact on what happens during the summer. From a geographical point of view those institutions in tourist areas see an increase in the number of jobs, for example tourist attractions, retail, cafes and bars, and other areas of hospitality including live-in jobs in hotels. For seasonal work in tourism areas recruitment starts early as the season normally starts as early as April, one respondent commented “Most summer vacation recruitment takes place between December and June each year”.

Whether the institution is campus or non-campus based can affect the number of jobs available. With a campus based institution the fact that there are fewer students means that there is a drop in the number of jobs because students are not there to create the demand. This is typical of on-campus jobs particularly those based in student unions such as bars and retail outlets. This was not such an issue for institutions which were not specifically campus based. Where an institution provides conference facilities over the summer on-campus jobs in accommodation and hospitality continue. Other areas that students work in during the summer vacation include admissions, UCAS clearing, support at open days and outreach work. One institution based in the south east reported that they had 270 summer vacation jobs in 70 different departments.

A number of job shops are exploring project work opportunities for students with employers, but success rates have been variable. A couple of job shops in the south east had received more internship opportunities, including project work, from external employers who recognised that students would be available to undertake them.

One job shop based in the north east reported that their focus switches in the summer from jobs to supporting international students. A job shop based in the south west had piloted a new initiative regarding summer vacation work.

“The year I held a presentation specifically aimed at students staying in the area over the summer and looking for casual summer work. I invited local employers who need summer staff and they took applications from the students on the day. I am yet to hear how many students were recruited, however, there were enough positions available for all who attended and, in some cases, experience was not necessary so it was then up to the student then to secure themselves a job.”

A general theme which emerged from all regions was that there seemed to be more opportunities for working abroad at summer camps. This year the Olympics have also had an impact on the number of opportunities available to students. Although LOCOG and Podium have offered a lot of voluntary roles for the Olympics there have also been many paid positions too, one of the job shops in the south east commented on this.

“The majority are paid a minimum of £8.30 per hour (London Living Wage) or above. Most of the roles I have advertised have been on behalf of private companies who are contractors / sub contractors.”

The advice given by job shops regarding summer work is that students need to plan and apply early whether they want on-campus jobs, summer internships, project work or any other general work with external employers as most summer recruitment takes place earlier in the year.

**d. Placements**

The question regarding whether students continue to work part-time during placement years was explored as part of the think tanks and interviews, and a specific online survey to placement officers using their discussion list.

The first question related to whether students actively looked for part-time work while on placement. The views gathered through the think tanks regarding whether students do this was varied and was anecdotal as this isn’t monitored or tracked in any way. The majority felt that students focussed on their placement as with full-time placements there was little
time to work part-time as well. An exception to this was expressed by a couple of FE colleges who dealt with different types of placements, such as placements of one day a week during the academic year, or short placements of a few weeks. It was felt that with the former the students would probably work at the weekends, and in the case of the latter they would prioritise the placement and arrange their part-time work appropriately. Where placements were unpaid students would tend to work as well.

Similar views were expressed by the placement officers who completed the online survey, all of whom dealt with year out placements. The majority 80 per cent said that students would not work part-time, 10 per cent said yes but qualified this by saying that this would only apply to an unpaid placement, and 10 per cent didn’t know but also thought it would only apply to an unpaid placement.

The responses were slightly different when asked whether students who already have a part-time job continue with it in addition to their placement as the information was less clear. Again whether the placement was paid was an important factor, and also if the part-time job was at a more senior level the student would be more inclined to continue. The student would be concerned that if they resigned from the job for their placement year it would be difficult to return to it or to obtain another job. The location of the placement obviously plays an important part in this as if the placement involved relocation it would be impossible to continue with a current part-time job. Some placement officers, 30 per cent, thought that sometimes students would restrict geographically where they would take a placement because of part-time work commitments.
7. Supporting the sector

f. Management and location of job shops

NASES has a membership of 75 members based in England, of which the majority are managed by careers or a variation thereof such as careers and employability. 11 are managed by the students’ union. See appendix 2.

There are a couple of job shops which are located in the students’ union which are managed by careers or are managed jointly with the students’ union.

Of those job shops which are based in careers the majority at 61 per cent are integrated with careers but have dedicated staff members, 20 per cent are in a separate department with dedicated staff members, and 19 per cent are fully integrated without dedicated staff members.

There are a small number of commercial recruitment agency implants within institutional settings. two services were identified, in addition the Unitemps franchise is now run at eight university settings.

Bringing services together
The University of Exeter

The Works Job Shop, based in the Guild used to manage all vacancies and employment support for students whilst they were studying. The service also acted as a signposting service to enhance students’ employability. In May 2012 this was integrated with the careers service when the new Career Zone opened.

This service brings together all student facing careers related activities in the Career Zone with over 40 staff working to help students enhance their employability.

g. Mode of operation

A simple matching service (job centre style of operation) continues to be the most popular model with 37 job shops operating in this way. This mode of operation is often combined with other modes such as internal agency filling on-campus roles or external agency, however some job shops combine all three modes of operation; job centre style, internal agency and external agency.
h. Staff resources

The staffing resource in job shops is also very varied, 16 per cent of job shops have no full-time staff members, and three respondents commented that some staff members were term-time only.

Job shops with higher level staff resources included the following: 395 hours a week (315 full-time hours and 80 part-time hours); 352 hours (262 full-time, 75 part-time and 15 student hours) and 180 hours a week (150 full-time, 20 part-time and 14 student hours). 80 per cent of job shops had full-time staff members, 54 per cent had part-time staff members and 48 per cent student staff members.

Examples of those with lower level staff resources included 2-3 hours a week, two people part-time on job share and part-time at 18 hours a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of operation</th>
<th>Number of job shops</th>
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Unitemps Franchise Model

The Job Shop provision at the University of Warwick grew out of their HR department’s casual bank provision for administration and clerical staff. Now part of the University of Warwick Commercial Group, and based in the Students Union, Unitemps supplies all temporary staff on-campus.

After operating as a successful employment agency style service for many years they now franchise the model at seven Universities throughout the UK.

Unitemps is an online recruitment service that uses students, recent graduates and experienced candidates from the local community to provide temporary staff across all campus functions and to commercial businesses.
8. Combining part-time work with study

i. Effects of part-time work

The effects of part-time work while studying has been the subject of discussion for many years. As part of the think tanks job shops were asked whether they felt part-time work had a positive or negative impact generally, and also specifically on academic performance or degree attainment.

The general feeling was that they were unable to comment on degree attainment as this was outside their remit. Regarding academic performance again this was difficult to monitor, the student might be reluctant to admit to having problem balancing work with study. However as reported in Section 9 job shops recommend a maximum number of hours that a student should work in order to maintain a good work/study balance which is crucial.

Some job shops are involved in payroll for part-time work on-campus and are able to monitor this way, particularly where there is a recommended maximum number of hours. Where they feel the student is working too many hours they liaise with the academic department and encourage them to increase the number of students they employ rather than increasing the number of hours the students work. Other institutions have a policy where part-time work is not acceptable as a reason for not meeting academic deadlines.

Some commented on the financial aspects where students needed part-time work to cover general living costs and in a couple of extreme cases students had told them that without part-time work they would have been unable to continue with their course. As reported in Section 7 job shops generally feel that the increases in tuition fees will increase the need for students to work-part-time.

In addition to the financial aspect though the issue of employability and the developing of skills through work experience is becoming even more important. The overwhelming consensus was that part-time work brought considerable positive benefits provided there was a work/study balance.

Comments included:

“As long as the student manages their time carefully there is little impact on academic performance.”

“If many, we feel it can have a negative impact if they are committing too many hours to a job so only advertise roles which are 15 hours or less per week during the term time.”

“No, no evidence of this. Both on and off campus employers recognise the importance of revision and exam times. Also payroll report checks on earnings and if seem to be getting more money than would expect they would follow up.”

“No, part-time employment offers students the opportunity to greatly improve and evidence their time management skills which are very necessary for their graduate CV.”

j. Course related versus non related part-time work

Job shops were asked about the differing benefits two types of part-time work would bring to a student: at a basic level in a course related role, or at a higher, possibly supervisory, role in a non-related area.

This obviously can vary according to the student, a course related job can confirm one way or another whether they do want to work in a course related sector. Non-course related work can open up new sectors that they want to explore, which is particularly useful if the student knows they don’t want to work in a course related sector when they graduate. Some students are driven by financial circumstances and will opt for the work which pays most; others are able to
think longer term and will try to find course related work where possible. One job shop reported that when observing students searching for jobs on their website they sorted the results by salary so that those which paid the most were at the top.

Some courses lend themselves more easily to gaining related work experience than others, for example a student studying history might want work experience in a museum which would be more difficult to find than a student studying a course in hospitality.

The sector is also important e.g. hairdressing apprenticeships and jobs would require relevant experience. In some sectors you are expected to start at the bottom and work your way up the ladder so to have the basic skills in that sector might be better than higher level skills in a different sector.

A job shop in the FE sector felt it was different to a university, employers have higher expectations of graduates but with college students experience which gives basic skills such as punctuality and being well presented can be valued by the employer.

The general feeling was that both types of work are important. Students need experience on their CV as when they start to apply for permanent work after graduation they will be in competition with others who have placements, work experience. Sometimes experience in a different sector gaining skills like teamwork, communication, customer service etc can be as good as a limited amount of experience in the relevant sector provided students sell the benefits to be got from the job such as skills learnt. Students need to be encouraged to recognise the value of transferrable skills gained in any part-time work, particularly those gained from non-related job as they do not always recognise the value of work experience gained in a sector not related to their course.

Comments included.

“A course related job can confirm one way or another whether they do want a job in a course related sector. Doing non-course related work can open up new sectors that they want to explore, particularly useful if the student knows they don’t want a course related job.”

“Students need to be work ready when they leave Uni, and having a part time job is definitely an advantage. Any WE is essential need to be “work ready”.”
9. Supporting students who are working while studying

Successfully combining part-time work with study can be a challenge for many students when trying to find a good work/study balance. Job shops endeavour to provide advice and support to students to help them effectively combine work with study. They provide information, advice and guidance on this issue through a number of means, including recommending a limit to the number of hours worked per week. However the most popular way of helping students with the challenge is by sourcing and advertising suitable jobs with 86 per cent of job shops indicating that they do this.

k. Information and advice

Information is provided through a number of channels such as printed materials, online resources, advice is given through workshops and in one to one sessions.

l. Work/study balance – limiting the number of hours worked

One of the ways that job shops do this is by recommending a limit to the number of hours that a student works during term time. The response to the online survey indicates that 85 per cent of job shops do this with the majority, 49 per cent, recommending 14 – 16 hours a week, with 28 per cent recommending 17 – 20 hours. There were comments that a lower limit was recommended for undergraduates than for postgraduates. Two respondents indicated that the limit specified was university policy not just a recommendation. Others which had a limit of 20 hours indicated that this was to bring the recommendation into line with that imposed on international students through their visa requirements, in order that there was clarity in the message to students.

“We recommend 16, but will advertise jobs up to 20 hours per week in term. We are keen to review this with our institution, as we recognise there are more postgraduates and part-time students with different needs and study obligations.”
As expected there is a degree of synergy between the recommended limit to the number of hours and the average number of hours per week for the part-time vacancies advertised with 54 per cent of them being 14 – 16 hours, and 30 per cent 11 – 13 hours. However it is worth noting that a number of respondents were unable to answer this question as they do not collect this information and of those that answered over 90 per cent were estimated.

The same question was asked with regard to the advertised average number of hours per week for vacation vacancies. The average number of hours for vacation work was in excess of 20 hours per week, although a few respondents indicated that often the vacancies were full-time roles, and again the information provided was estimated.

“Many vacation jobs are full-time roles, although this would depend on the type of job taken up by the student (i.e. camp work, retail, hospitality, etc.).”

Supporting students who are working while studying

Figure 11. Do you recommend a limit to the number of hours per week which a student can devote to part-time work during term time?

- We do not impose a limit – 16%
- 11 to and including 13 hours – 6%
- 14 to and including 16 hours – 49%
- 17 to and including 20 hours – 28%
- More than 20 hours – 2%

Figure 12. What is the average number of hours per week for the part-time vacancies advertised through your service?

- Fewer than 10 hours – 9%
- 11 to and including 13 hours – 30%
- 14 to and including 16 hours – 54%
- 17 to and including 20 hours – 7%
10. Improving student employability

With the increasing importance of work experience and employability job shops provide a number of different services and activities to help students improve their employability. Job shops were asked to indicate these as part of the online survey.

Figure 13. Improving student employability: what activities do you participate in to help your students with this challenge? Please tick all that apply.

Leeds University Union

Leeds University Union (LUU) conducts a review of strategy with students every four years. During the last research in 2009 (which informs their strategy for 2010 – 2014) 17 per cent of students said the single most important thing they wanted LUU to do for them was to help them get a good career. This was a dramatic change from the 2005 results where the number one response was ‘help me have fun’!

They looked at how they could deliver this goal and formulated four big ideas:

- provide somewhere for students to grow their skills and experiences;
- support students and graduates as they enter the world of work;
- ensure their own student staff and volunteers can develop their careers after the Union;
- push the skills message to students from day one.

All of these activities, including the job shop are based in a central Opportunities hub within the Students’ Union.
11. Think tank issues

a. Increased unpaid work experience opportunities

Job shops and NUS have an important role to play in informing both students and employers of National Minimum Wage (NMW) legislation with regard to offers of unpaid work experience. The increasing use of ‘Internship’, ‘Placement’ and ‘Work Experience’ in job titles has lead to confusion, as well as a general misunderstanding, that these terms automatically imply an exemption from NMW.

A variety of guidance is available to assist job shops when advising students and employers of both the legal and moral obligations; NASES has issued guidance on unpaid work experience with a 5 step check for students, job shops and employers. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) has advice for students and the Chartered Institute of Personal and Development have guidance for employers on internships.

The policy adopted by job shops regarding unpaid work experience opportunities varies considerably; some will not advertise at all, others will if there is a fixed time period, and others will advertise, particularly if they have a close working relationship with the employer. This lack of consistency in approach can cause confusion to employers.

Those which do advertise will ensure that the NMW regulations are followed and that the student is fully aware of the situation. Some job shops reported success in educating employers and negotiating a salary for the opportunity. In some sectors, such as fashion and the media, there is an expectation that people will work unpaid in order to gain work experience of the sector. Also some courses have a mandatory placement year which is always unpaid but the students are made aware of this from the start.

Aside from the legal aspect of unpaid work experience, there is also the issue of widening participation in that only those with financial and personal circumstances that allow them the freedom to work unpaid are able to commit to unpaid opportunities with charities and other legally exempt organisations.

Comments from job shops included:

“‘Yes, unpaid internships are only for those who can afford it.”

“Companies want student workers but often don’t have the funds to afford to pay – so if the student can afford to work unpaid, this will give them employability skills.”

“Our policy is not to advertise unpaid work (other than allowed by NMW legislation) or self-employed/cash in hand work.”

“More unpaid internships yet not dealt with the same across all universities.”

The policy adopted by job shops regarding self-employed or commission only opportunities also varies with some advertising them and others not.

“We tend not to promote self employed or commission only positions.”

“We don’t advertise commission only opportunities and will only advertise unpaid positions which meet the criteria set out in our Vacancy Advertising Policy.”

“We don’t advertise vacancies which are self-employed or commission only.”

Those which advertise commission based work publish guidelines for students of the issues to be aware of, and do so on the basis that they believe the student should decide whether the opportunity is economically viable for their circumstances.
Students working while studying

University of Portsmouth

We have been working proactively since 1997 with local employers to increase the number of vacancies advertised. However it has been important to ensure the standards of vacancies being advertised and to protect students from companies that may not offer straightforward part-time opportunities.

The numbers of vacancies rejected is increasing, detailed below are some of the part-time opportunities that have rejected over the last two years.

- Warning signs – Bad grammar, bad spelling, no company email address, basic company website, mobile contact numbers only, virtual companies
- Part-time vacancies requiring a lot of responsibility and then only paying NMW
- Working in clients own homes ie tutoring, cleaning, babysitting – no guarantee of student or client safety
- Working from a student’s home ie not allowed in Halls contract and usually not allowed in a private tenancy agreement
- On campus marketing – students are being used to shortcut their university or students’ union marketing requirements
- Self employed – many students do not understand PAYE and are not ready to work as self employed. These vacancies are also not available for International Students. Self employed opportunities are not currently advertised but some opportunities may be offered in future if students are offered support about becoming self employed.
- Some opportunities are advertised as self employed where they do not have the flexibility of their workload and are actually employees – use HMRC Employment Status Indicator to check
- Overseas companies – not possible to check company
- On campus marketing – promoting a company offering private Accommodation – this can be in conflict with University depts or SU
- Summer work overseas – teaching, sports activities, youth work, babysitting, au pair etc
- Too much responsibility for part-time work that is only paying NMW
- Door to door sellers – energy companies, Double glazing – student security working in the evening and especially during the winter
- Companies offering unpaid internships to students and graduates - this is an area that has greatly increased and companies are emailed with information on the HMRC media articles

m. Lack of work experience

Often students have no previous work experience which makes it harder to get a job, and these students need more support from the job shop. The lack of work experience also means they have no experience of the world of work in general, such as the need to turn up on time, and so need to develop a more committed attitude.

“We are seeing greater numbers of applications for each opportunity. It is difficult to convey this to students, and get them to realise they need to spend more time on their application/CV. When we point out the increased competition, and tell them how many other students have applied for a job, they are often very surprised.”

n. Meeting expectations

Students often have high expectations and specific requirements regarding part-time work experience which they expect to be met, however often this can’t be the case because of the types of jobs available and the competition. The forthcoming increase in tuition
fees may result in even higher expectations; this is discussed in more detail below.

In the think tanks a lot of job shops indicated that students were often reluctant to travel to jobs, this was for a variety of reasons. The cost and availability of transport was one reason as it could almost negate the pay for the job, and when the main reason for working is to earn money the job becomes unviable. The availability of transport can be an issue in rural areas for example jobs in hotels. The majority of students preferred to work on-campus or at least in the local area, this can be a challenge when there are insufficient jobs to meet demand. This was less of an issue in city based institutions particularly London where transport is more accessible.

o. Mature students

Mature students, particularly those with children, face specific challenges related to the need to find jobs which will fit around their family/child care commitments. One job shop tries to negotiate flexibility over hours with their employers; this is easier to do when the student is a reliable and committed worker. Job shops reported wide variations in the types of work which mature students were looking for and would accept, even within the same regions. Some job shops in the north east reported that mature students were more likely to need the money and so were prepared to take lower level jobs, others reported the opposite and said that mature students wanted jobs of a similar type and status to that they held before going to university. The same differences were reported in the south east.

p. Tuition fees increases

The overwhelming feeling from job shops was that there would be an increase in demand for their services for part-time work. The reasons for this included the need to earn more money in order to incur less debt, an expectation of wanting better value for their money as well as improving their employability skills. The latter could result in an increase in students specifically wanting course related work. Some job shops indicated that the availability of part-time work is a question being raised by both students and their parents at open days. It is also possible that students will have higher expectations of the work they are prepared to undertake, so lower paid roles may be harder for job shops to fill, from the point of view that students will need to work longer hours to get the same pay as elsewhere and for the skills they gain.

Comments included:

“Students will definitely be expecting more value for their money, and I suspect this will include their expectations of finding paid work.”

“Parents at University open days have expressed a keen interest in their children finding a part time job while they study.”

A minority were less sure what the impact might be and that the increase in tuition fees might result in an increased focus on their academic studies in order to obtain better value for money.

Comments included:

“It will be interesting to see. As repayment of tuition fees will not begin until after graduation it may not have an immediate impact.”

“This could go either way: Either students who need to cover the costs of these new fees are in more urgent need of part-time work for financial reasons; or the students now coming to university and paying these fees are in the fortunate position to be able to afford the fees without requiring a part-time job.”

q. Numbers of students working

Recent research with students by the NUS and Sodexo has indicated that there has been a drop in the number of students who are working part-time, job shops were asked about the changes they have seen based on experiences in their service.

In the think tanks and interviews the first reaction was that there had in fact been an increase, however with further exploration and discussion it would appear that it was the number of students looking for jobs and therefore using
the job shops which had, in general, increased and not necessarily the number of students working.

In the online survey job shops were asked whether the number of students looking for work, the number applying for jobs and the number which were successful in getting work had increased, decreased, stayed the same, or whether they did not have this information.

As can be seen the responses support the discussions at the think tanks with 70 per cent of job shops seeing an increase in students looking for work and a 53 per cent in students applying for jobs, however there was a reported 27 per cent decrease in the number of successful applications. This would appear to support the research with students mentioned above.

When asked if they had any suggestions as to why the number of students working had decreased one reason given was the increased competition with people who had become unemployed and so had more experience.

There was a feeling that because of higher levels of unemployment the wider population and increased competition people were accepting jobs at lower levels than they had previously held which was putting pressure on students who traditionally might take the lower level jobs.

An area of missing information is the number of students successfully gaining employment through job shops, this is difficult and resource intensive information to find due to the volume of matches and also data protection issues with employers. In an agency style service this is obviously much easier to obtain.

Job shops were also given the opportunity to comment:

“Part time hours have become more competitive with general public competing for these jobs too, especially in retail, catering.”

“We have more coming to ask us how to find work, and they often don’t want retail and bar work as they need to enhance their cv through admin or industry/course specific work.”

r. Financial support

As part of the think tanks job shops were asked whether they were aware of any impact part-time work might have on other financial support for which the student might be eligible, or of students swapping part-time work for financial support. The overwhelming response to this was that this issue wasn’t dealt with by the job shop, but by another part of the institution such as Student Services or Welfare so they generally just refer on. However several did comment that they thought that should this happen they would probably have become aware of it.

There is cross referral between the job shop and the other department responsible for this issue, with students being referred to the job shop to look for part-time opportunities or vice versa if the student was still suffering financial hardship despite having found paid work through the job shop.
Recommendations
12. Recommendations

This review draws together the experience and expertise of the student employment sector a number of conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the work.

- Specific student research is required to identify the extent and the impact of part time work to assist students and to help institutions and employers prepare and support working students.
- As such a large increase was seen in the approaches to job shops from employers offering unpaid opportunities additional support and lobbying is required to discourage the incidence of unpaid placements.
- As a result of the recession and a reduction in job opportunities available for students some services have diversified into offering; commission only, self employed vacancies etc Areas which they haven’t worked with before. More student support is needed to ensure this type of employment can be successful for students i.e. guidance of tax and self employment regulations, safety guidance for students working alone.
- Closer collaboration between professional bodies and student organisations supporting student employability to ensure the support practitioners and students receive isn’t fragmented.
- In addition to employability initiatives there is a need for additional activities such as NUS Employability Awards, NASES Student Employee of the Year Awards, to help students articulate learning from work.
- While the majority of services track student and employer usage some do not and the majority of services do not collate statistics on who has found work, a comprehensive benchmarking quality initiative within the student employment sector should be explored.
Appendices
13. Appendix 1 – List of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Online survey</th>
<th>Think tank/interview</th>
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| University of Bath Students’ Union | South West | * | * 
| University of Bedfordshire | London and South East | * | 
| University of Birmingham Guild of Students | Midlands | * | * 
| University of Bolton | North West | * | 
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| University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) | North West | * | 
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| University of Derby | Midlands | * | * 
| University of East Anglia | Midlands | * | * 
| University of Essex | London and South East | * | * 
| University of Exeter | South West | * | * 
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| University of Hertfordshire Students Union | London and South East | * |
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14. Appendix 2 – Participating students’ union services

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15. Appendix 4 – Service questionnaire

Available at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WWG3R2T
16. Appendix 5 – Think tank topics

Students

1. Thinking about different types of students what are their differing needs?
   Typical/traditional undergrads. Mature. Those with families. Different socio-economic groups etc. Types of work or sectors they go into.
   What’s the evidence?

2. What are the challenges faced by the different groups.

Vacancies

3. Bearing vacancies advertised what type of work is typically undertaken/available?
   Work specifically related to the course being studied or more general. Different types – supervisory but non-related; basic but related, different benefits of these.

4. From your experience of dealing with students and the vacancies advertised how well do you think that the vacancies available meet the expectations of students?

5. Consider what impact the summer vacation has on student’s working.
   Location of institution – seasonal?
   Types of jobs available in summer – changes to this? Do you do anything special to try and deal with this?

6. Do you feel that part-time work in general while studying impacts on academic performance or degree attainment? Evidence or steps taken in institution?

7. Do you feel that the type of part-time work undertaken impacts on academic performance or degree attainment? Evidence or steps taken in institution?

Student employment market

8. Do you have any experience of what happens in placement years? Do students also work-part-time as well as placement work? For the same employer, different employers?

9. Effects of recession?

10. Drop in number of students working, Y/N if Yes then why?

11. Are you aware of any impact part-time work might have on other financial support for which the student might be eligible? Any evidence of students swapping p/t work for financial support? Who deals with this in your institution?

12. Do you feel that it might affect the attitude of the student to part-time work?
Endnotes
Endnotes

1 Vacancies paying commission only
2 FE further education
3 WE work experience
4 The Sodexo University Lifestyle Survey 2012