

A tale of two graduates – using data to define the persona’s you’re aiming to attract

With this year’s Employer Benchmark and Candidate Insights reports, SAGEA also launched the **Candidate Insights Dashboard** – a quick, powerful way to dig deeper into graduate profiles. Filter by job type, location, gender, or race, and you can see exactly who you’re targeting – and how to reach them. To show how it works, we compared two very different graduate groups: Finance and Electrical/Software Engineering.



GRADUATES IN FINANCE ROLES *

When making decisions to apply for roles, this group wants to be sure they will gain access to excellent training and development opportunities, whilst taking the employer’s reputation into account and prioritising their long-term career prospects, coupled with job security and an organisation culture that appeals.

Just under two thirds of this group will start to research employers in their final year of study, with a third considering their options from their first or penultimate year of study. They have perused a potential employer’s website, and most will have followed you on LinkedIn, with **72% engaging with the careers service** at their higher education institution to refine their search for opportunities. They have also relied on their network of people in industry or family and friends to get to where they are today.

9% made only one application, with a third making as many as 20 applications. Despite engaging in their job search later, **58% were able to join their first-choice** employer and **70% will have been able to choose between one or two job offers**. Only half of this group have any kind of work experience, though a quarter have between one and six months of relevant experience when they start work.

Their greatest source of support in the workplace is their line manager. When it comes to engagement and retention, these graduates prioritise internal mobility, remuneration, career advancement and continued training and development. Half are keen on further study and less than half are considering pursuing international opportunities.

**We had a total of 112 candidates complete our survey, making up 4% of the overall survey population.*



GRADUATES IN ELECTRICAL OR SOFTWARE ENGINEERING *

This group of graduates have ordered their job search criteria slightly differently, with their primary concern being long term career prospects, followed by training and development and an employer’s reputation. Job Security and culture were fourth and fifth on the priority list – the same as our Finance group.

This group had a more even spread when it comes to the timing of their job search – a tenth started to research employers prior to University, with a fifth doing so in their first year, another fifth in their penultimate year and just under half in their final year. Being ahead of the game when it comes to researching potential employers, this group made fewer applications, with **a fifth making only one application, a further fifth between two and three applications and a fifth made 20 or more applications**. An earlier focus on their job search found **40% of this group with one offer, 28% with two and 23% with three offers** – 61% ended up working for their first-choice employer.

Using similar information sources to our Finance grads, it was interesting to note that this group also preferred employer brochures which did not come up as strongly for the Finance group.

Our Engineering grads entered the workplace with slightly more work experience with only 43% stating that they had no prior experience. This group tend to spread their net wider when it comes to utilising support networks once in the workplace, making more use of their mentors and HR than the previous group, but placing as much emphasis on the importance of their line managers.

When it comes to retention, this group are slightly more driven by remuneration, with promotion and advancement and internal mobility as their next priorities. **Training and Development and work life balance feature among their top five and 53% would like to gain international experience** in the future.

**We had a total of 151 candidates complete our survey, making up 5.5% of the overall survey population*



WHY PERSONA’S MATTER

The contrast is clear: both groups care about similar things, but the order of priorities – and the way they search – is different.

By using data to build specific graduate personas, you can:

- 1 Reach them at the right stage of their journey
- 2 Speak to their top priorities
- 3 Choose the channels that work best for them

In short: the more detail you have, the better your message lands. The dashboard lets you go beyond broad assumptions – and craft tailored attraction and recruitment strategies that work. And for employers who had more than ten candidates complete the survey, the dashboard provides exclusive access data on your candidates.

OUR TWO PERSONA’S		Finance Grads – The Strategic Planners	Electronic/Software Engineering Grads – The Early Explorers
	Application strategy	Quality over quantity	Strategic and thorough
	Tailored messaging	To lead with what matters most – Training and learning value proposition, reputation and stability, clear career progression paths. Ongoing employer branding, but with more intensive outreach during their final year may work best for this group.	To lead with long term career prospects, training and learning value proposition, reputation and stability. This group want to be engaged early – prior to University and throughout their studies.
	Where to Focus	Your company website LinkedIn University Careers Service Industry networks Personal networks More focused digital presence	Your company website LinkedIn University Careers Service Industry networks Personal networks Employer brochures