

# Internships no help to graduates trying to find good jobs, research says

April 6 2016, by Tony Trueman

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Internships in the creative industries are no help to graduates trying to find good jobs, new research shows.

The British Sociological Association's annual conference in Birmingham heard today [Wednesday 6 April 2016] that the internships did not result in a bigger salary or more creative job.

Wil Hunt, of the University of Portsmouth, analysed 615 replies to a survey he ran of British graduates two to six years after they finished degrees in design, art and communications. One in four had done an internship, paid or unpaid, after leaving [university](#).

He found that 72% of design, art and communications graduates had a graduate level job and 60% had a job in a creative industry. This rose to 84% and 77% when considering those who had done a paid internship.

But when other factors such as degree grades and prestige of university attended were discounted, interns were no more likely to have found creative or graduate-level job than others. In other words, intern and non-interns with the same degree grade from the same kind of university had equal chances of finding these types of work.

Mr Hunt also found that when comparing those who had been interns with other graduates with the same degree grade and from the same kind of university, internship had not improved their salaries.

In fact, those who had done unpaid internships were on average paid less – around £12,000, when compared with graduates who had not done one, who earned around £18,000. Paid internships did increase salaries, he found, but most internships were unpaid.

"The idea of internships is that they are supposed to give you a foot in the door and therefore it might be reasonable to ask whether they really do benefit individuals in the short to medium term, particularly in areas where they are becoming increasingly commonplace," Mr Hunt told the conference.

"Based on this analysis the answer is that there is no clear evidence that they increase the chances of getting a graduate job, or getting paid more, at least for art and design and communications graduates, and unpaid internships may actually lead to lower pay." One reason for the lower salary might be the delayed entrance to paid work due to the [internship](#) or a weaker bargaining position when graduates get their first paid position.

By analysing official data, Mr Hunt also found that 70 per cent of those graduates on internships in creative industries were unpaid. Overall, 58 per cent of [graduates](#) in internships in all job sectors were unpaid.

Provided by British Sociological Association

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