

60% of young people in U.K. say opportunities to learn job skills worsened by pandemic

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Sixty percent of students in school, college or university felt their opportunities to learn job skills worsened due to the pandemic, according to a new study led by UCL researchers. The percentage

remained high even when school and colleges reopened.

The briefing paper from the UCL Institute of Education, funded by the Economic Social and Research Council (ESRC), as part of UK Research & Innovation's rapid response to COVID-19, also found that 42% of young people did not know what job they would have by age 30.

The paper, which is part of the COVID-19 Youth Economic Activity and Health (YEAH) study, includes responses from a panel of 1,542 16-25-year-olds who were asked questions about [job skills](#) and employment in February and May 2021. Of the 1542 participants, 634 were students or pupils. The remainder were either in work or not in employment, [education](#), or training.

Co-author, Dr. Golo Henseke (UCL Institute of Education) said: "Right from the start of the first national lockdown in March of 2020, employment prospects were expected to worsen for [young workers](#). Between spring and autumn 2020, we know that youth unemployment in the UK rose faster than at any point since the 2008 financial crisis.

"The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for a whole cohort of young people trying to move from education into employment is expected to be long-lasting, comprising an immediate rise in youth unemployment and 'scarring." One key mechanism through which scarring occurs is the loss of opportunity for young people to acquire job skills in education and after graduation.

"Our survey confirms that about one in five students failed to secure an internship despite wanting to do one in the winter and spring of 2021 and the majority of students also perceived a worsening of their job skills learning."

The research shows that the volume of paid work among [young people](#) in

education or training has dropped significantly below pre-pandemic levels since the first national lockdown in March 2020. In the first quarter of 2021, students still spent about 20% less time in paid work than before the pandemic.

The authors say it is those on the cusp of entering the labor market who need help to become better prepared for a successful transition, especially so when facing an uncertain economic climate.

Co-author, Dr. Ingrid Schoon (UCL Institute of Education) said: "Young people in education and training have suffered the triple whammy of lost learning time, a sharp drop in available work experience placements and internships, and a switch to remote work and online learning, which might not have been possible for all.

"Through closer collaboration between education providers and employers, opportunities to develop valuable work experience, job skills and professional networks are achievable. An evaluation and potential extension of the Kickstart Scheme can be a first step in this direction."

More information: Career Ready? UK Youth during the Covid-19 Crisis: [www.llakes.ac.uk/sites/default..._for_publication.pdf](http://www.llakes.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/llakes_2021_07_career_ready_uk_youth_during_the_covid-19_crisis_for_publication.pdf)

Provided by University College London

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