

DOORS OPEN FOR GRADUATES

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WORKER shortages are presenting an ideal opportunity for university graduates, with many offered positions without even submitting a job application.

Research by job site Indeed reveals graduate recruitment is recovering from its pandemic slump, with almost one in five graduates securing a role without having to formally apply.

Overall, more than half of graduates successfully find work after submitting three or less job applications, the research shows.

“Graduate employment prospects are stronger than I have seen in many years,” says Career Confident director Helen Green. “I am seeing an increasing proportion of final year university students and graduates with minimal or no relevant experience securing graduate roles, particularly in sectors experiencing high demand and worker shortages, including health, education, logistics and community services.”

Less graduates available

Green says the Great Resignation, high levels of absenteeism due to Covid and the flu and more remote work options have combined to create increased demand for graduates.

She says lower graduate numbers have also played a role, noting a decline in university enrolments during the pandemic.

“I have seen a higher proportion of students withdrawing from courses or changing to short courses, deferring or entering the workforce in sectors that were operating during lockdowns,” she says. “Therefore, I’d expect graduate numbers to be lower than previously.” Green says some students have opted to defer graduation to take advantage of internship opportunities or to take a “late gap year” and enter the workforce or volunteer in a field related to their study, further reducing the number of people applying for graduate roles.

Fast-tracked careers

Career coach Sally McKibbin says almost half of graduate employers expect to hire more than five graduates this year. Two-thirds of employers also anticipate more opportunities for graduates to fast-track their career, compared to the start of the pandemic.

“If you are showing aptitude and you are hard working and you really want it, then there are opportunities to progress more quickly,” McKibbin says. “Graduates are in a really good position right now. They definitely have better opportunities to secure roles and ... to fast-track their careers.”

No time for complacency

Despite strong employment prospects, McKibbin says now is not the time for graduates to become complacent. “The research showed 61 per cent (of graduate employers) are turned off by a lack of enthusiasm by a candidate and 53 per cent were unimpressed by a lack of organisation,” she says.

“Be prepared, research the organisation you are applying for – whether it’s (looking) through company (website) pages or their social media to understand why you want to work for the company (you are applying to) and practise some interview questions. While there may be more opportunities than usual, you still need to put your best foot forward to secure the job that’s best for you.”