

The romance is over: St Andreans no longer attract top employers

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Cartoon: Monica Burns

The University of St Andrews has missed out on a spot in the 20 universities most targeted by the UK's top 100 employers. According to the report by High Flier Research, universities such as Edinburgh, Nottingham and Bristol were amongst the most sought after, with the top spot given to Warwick.

The data, released in January 2013, highlights the difference between the University's league table standing and its employability; with both Oxford and Cambridge being 7th and 4th respectively. In fact, the University of St Andrews has not been in the top 20 since 2008-2009, when it came 20th.

Universities which have consistently been targeted by top employers in the past four years, such as Kraft, Boots and Barclays, include lesser known universities, such as Aston, Southampton and Strathclyde. The report also indicates that graduate applications for consumer goods increased most, up 25% compared with 2011-2012, with engineering, banking and accountancy seeing similar increases.

These increases come at a time when the number of graduate posts have slumped, with graduate recruitment

increasing by just 2.7% this year; the weakest figure since 2009. Paul Brown, Director of the Careers Centre, highlighted the fact that it offers summer internship and research schemes.

Moreover, he explained that the University Rector, Alistair Moffat, recently created a bursary that “funds people who need financial aid to get this experience.” When asked whether the University could be doing more, Brown highlighted the Careers Centre’s increased use of alumni networks and social media websites like LinkedIn: “There is a lot more being made available... Unusually, we offer a lifelong service to graduates... on our website, there’s an option for alumni to ask us any questions that they want, and we’ll speak to people on the phone and people come to see us too.”

Brown also highlighted The Sunday Times’ 2012 research, which places St Andrews in good stead with universities like Oxford, Durham and Edinburgh. For instance, the number of St Andrews students in full-time, paid employment was 37.4% in 2012, in comparison to Durham with 35.4%, Edinburgh with 48.3% and Oxford with 34.8% of alumni in full-time jobs.

Managing director of High Fliers Research, Martin Birchall, commented: “Our latest research shows just how hard today’s university students are working to get a graduate job at the end of their degree.” David Gray, Principal of Stewart’s Melville College and Mary Erskine School, which sends around 40 students to St Andrews a year, told *The Saint*: “How effectively degrees can be linked to future employment has become increasingly significant in recent years.”