



DEGREE-DING

Top graduates from UK's elite universities face dead-end jobs

BY ADAM THORN

STUDENTS at Britain's leading universities are having to take jobs as shop assistants and shelf stackers when they finally get their degrees.

Super-bright graduates on more than 20 courses in elite institutions are struggling to find the professional positions they expected.

Many of these talented students achieved straight As in their A Levels and GCSEs just to get a place. Normally they could have walked into a top job on a big salary.

But the recession means many are having to take menial jobs on low wages to get by.

Our investigation looked at prospects for students on every course at the top-rated universities after Oxford and Cambridge, including Durham, Warwick, Bristol, York and St Andrews in Scotland.

We examined hundreds of pages of figures compiled by the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Each year they ask graduates how they are doing six months after their courses finish.

We discovered 21 courses where the first or second job they were most likely to get was "Sales Assistant or Retail Cashier".

Tills

Talented graduates are spending their days stacking shelves, manning the tills and pushing trolleys as in the examples in our graphic below.

Our figures do not include students taking gap years to travel.

Mike Barnard of recruitment website Milkround.com claims even the brightest have never had it so tough. He said: "This year's finalists may be up against 2008 and 2009 graduates who will have had up to two years to gain experience or additional qualifications that will put them ahead."

Beth Dickson, 23, left York two years ago after studying Linguistics and spent a year in retail before finding a top job as a Junior Account Manager. She said: "The first year was really tough. Then I spent a year working in America to boost my CV. I hope things improve for the next intake."

Universities minister David Willetts believes long-term prospects for graduates are still good. He said: "The job market does remain competitive for new graduates in these difficult economic times. However, a degree is a good investment in the long term."

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PROBLEM:
A student goes from swotting to swabbing



ELITE UNI.....York
TOPIC.....English
RESULTFirst
JOB.....Cleaning
spills in McDonald's

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ELITE UNI	COURSE (MARK)	LIKELY JOB
Bristol	Biology (2nd)	Pushing trolleys at Tesco
Warwick	Law (2nd)	Shelf stacker at WHM
Bristol	Geography (1st)	Manning tills at Topshop
York	Sociology (1st)	Starbucks employee
St. Andrews	Biology (2nd)	One Stop assistant

SUNDAY

A PAINTING of multi-millionaire Charles Saatchi with a halo made from a cheese box sparked complaints.

QUICKIE

MUSEUM FUME SCARE

EIGHT thousand people were evacuated from a London museum yesterday over fears of toxic fumes.

Some visitors at the British Museum complained of sore throats and eyes, so police cleared the landmark building at 1pm. It is

believed no one needed to go to hospital.

A museum spokeswoman said: "It was a gas or chemical incident. Police conducted a full search and nothing was discovered." The museum is due to re-open today.