

Graduate Employment in the Performing Arts

Contents

- ◆ 'First Destination' Statistics
- ◆ Employment in the Creative Industries
- ◆ Establishing Careers in the Performing Arts



'First Destination' Statistics

The 'first destination' statistics are produced from a survey, carried out by institutions among their own graduates, to obtain information about what recent graduates are doing six months after graduation.

Music

<i>Destination¹</i>	<i>1998-1999</i>	<i>1999-2000</i>	<i>2000-2001</i>
Entered Employment	51.4 %	53.1 %	52.3 %
Undertaking Study / Training	39.0 %	37.6 %	37.7 %
Assumed to be Unemployed	3.3 %	4.1 %	4.9 %
Not available for employment/others	6.3 %	5.2 %	5.1 %

Approximately "13% of graduate musicians enter 'performance-related' employment (listed as musicians, musical instrument players, composers or arrangers), 8% become teachers of music and/or dancing, and 74% go into 'other occupations'".²

Drama

<i>Destination³</i>	<i>1998-1999</i>	<i>1999-2000</i>	<i>2000-2001</i>
Entered Employment	68.2 %	69.5 %	68.0 %
Undertaking Study / Training	19.5 %	16.1 %	17.5 %
Assumed to be Unemployed	4.9 %	6.5 %	6.8 %
Not available for employment/others	7.5 %	7.9 %	7.6 %

20.3% of drama graduates enter 'drama and related occupations' (listed as actors and dancers, stage managers, producers, directors and agents).⁴

The percentage of drama graduates undertaking further study or training is comparable to the average figure for all graduates (18%). The higher percentage for music qualifiers reflects the significant proportion of music graduates entering postgraduate teacher training.

Recently published university league tables have been interpreted as demonstrating that these official statistics exaggerate the employment prospects of graduates because they do not distinguish between 'graduate' jobs, requiring high-level qualifications and skills, and other types of employment.⁵ In many non-vocational degree subjects, up to a quarter of graduates work in jobs considered to be 'non-graduate'.⁶

The limitations of the 'first destinations' dataset, however, mean that the league tables should not be taken at face value. Three issues, in particular, need to be taken into consideration:

1. The classifications of jobs listed in the HESA statistics cannot all be readily assigned to the categories of 'graduate' and 'non-graduate' jobs.
2. The 'first destinations' survey is conducted only six months after graduation and so many respondents are likely to be in 'stop-gap' jobs.⁷
3. Of those graduates recorded as undertaking further study or training after leaving university, most will go on to 'graduate' posts. When studying for research degrees and teacher training is considered as 'graduate' work, then 'graduate' employment for music is comparable to social work and law.



Employment in the Creative Industries

Full-time employment in the music industry was estimated at 122,07322 in 1997/98, with composers and musicians representing 30% of total employment in the industry.⁸

The size of the dance and drama labour markets is not clearly identified in the recent studies conducted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The most comprehensive study of the sector, on behalf of the Arts Council, estimated that the number of people “economically active” in the dance labour market was between 20,000 and 25,000. The drama labour market was estimated at around 40,000, of whom approximately 75% were performers.⁹

Self-employment, part-time and occasional employment and multiple job-holding (often embracing an arts-related job alongside a non-arts occupation) are characteristic patterns of employment in the creative industries. Overall, in the performance and the technical sectors of the music industry, 77% of workers regard themselves as self-employed or freelance.¹⁰

Creative arts graduates are almost twice as likely to be in part-time employment in the first 18 months

after graduation than graduates from all subject areas. Overall, 3% of graduates became self-employed, while 13% of creative arts graduates were self-employed in their first job.¹¹



Establishing Careers in the Performing Arts

There is an absence of reliable research tracking the subsequent careers of individuals several years after graduation. Some small scale studies have been conducted. A survey of 300 recent alumni undertaken by the Royal College of Music found that the majority were still working in the music profession. Only 6 of the individuals contacted had left the profession within 5 years of leaving the RCM and some of those still did freelance performance work. So, the initial conclusion of this ongoing study is that music training of the type offered by conservatoires like the RCM is relatively more ‘successful’ than other forms of vocational training - there are, for instance, much higher rates of recently qualified teachers leaving that profession.¹²

References

¹ Data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. The target population for the HESA study includes all UK and EU based students graduating from full time courses. About 80% of graduates contacted reply to the survey.

² *Creating a Land With Music*, Youth Music, 2002, p. 12. This figure excludes performers trained in private music schools.

³ Data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. This statistic includes dance. For a comparison with graduates in other humanities disciplines, in 2000-2001, 58.1% of English graduates entered employment, 28.1% were studying/training, 7.2% were unemployed/other, 5.5% not available for work; J. Brennan and R. Williams, *The English Degree and Graduate Careers*, 2003, p. 16.

⁴ Data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

⁵ *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 9 May 2003.

⁶ *The Times Good University Guide*, 2003. The subject tables are available online at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,6734,00.html>

⁷ Other research has confirmed that, over the long-term, the majority of graduates do go on to work in ‘graduate jobs’. A study of the later career paths of graduates found that three years after graduation only 10% of leavers were in occupations that could be classed as ‘non-graduate’ jobs: *Moving On- Graduate Careers Three Years after Graduation*, 1999, DfEE/CSU/AGCAS/IER.

⁸ *Creative Industries Mapping Document*, DCMS, 2001, p. 8. This statistic excludes classical music.

⁹ Jackson, C., Honey, S., Hillage, J., and Stock, J., *Careers and Training in Dance and Drama. A Report of Research for the Arts Council of England*, Institute of Manpower Studies, 1994, Introduction, p. xvi.

¹⁰ *The Music Industry: Skills and Training Needs in the Twenty-First Century*, DCMS 2000, p. 5.

¹¹ *What do Creative Arts Graduates Do ?*, Enterprise Centre for Learning and Curriculum Innovation, 2000, pp. 2-3. The findings are based on a questionnaire survey of graduates (1990-1997) from higher education institutions in the North West of England. The Creative Arts figures include graduates from design courses.

¹² Royal College of Music, 'Working in Music' project (2001-present), *Newsletter* 3, 2003.

Published by PALATINE, Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music
The Great Hall, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YW

☎: 01542 593545 ✉: ralph.brown@lancaster.ac.uk 🌐: www.lancs.ac.uk/palatine

👤 Ralph Brown