

Step Out for Success

Student Counselling and Development Service

According to the *Report of Manpower Projection 2018* issued by the Labour and Welfare Bureau, it is projected that the local manpower supply with first degree or postgraduate qualifications will increase significantly from 788,400 (23.1%) in 2010 to 1,054,600 (29.4%) in 2018. What's more, the labour force with postgraduate education is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 7.1% from 155,300 in 2010 to 267,900 in 2018. When university degree is no longer the golden ticket, university students nowadays are facing unprecedented challenges in their career development.

The Student Counselling and Development Service is honoured to have Professor Leung Seung-Ming Alvin, Dean of Faculty of Education, a counselling psychologist as well as renowned scholar in career counselling to share with us his views on career development of university students.

1. Facing the increasing challenges of credential inflation and globalization, how can students prepare themselves better for their career development?

Due to the influence of globalization and communication advances, knowledge transformation and transmission are happening at a rapid pace. Subject knowledge is updated more regularly than before and cross-disciplinary collaboration is more common. In order to stay competitive, students should be able to keep up with the fast changing pace of the social-economic environment and market demands by being life-long learners who are constantly open to new knowledge.

On top of academic qualifications, students should also develop functional skills which can be applied and transferred to different jobs. Functional skills are the "atoms" of skills and they can be used in multiple jobs and careers. Examples of functional skills are what is known as the "3Cs", namely **creativity**, **communication** and **collaboration**: to think out of the box and propose innovative ideas; to understand and respond to the needs of others; and to work with colleagues and co-workers effectively. There are many functional skills that could be developed through the university experiences, including skills to work with people, data, and things.



2. How can students make the best use of various opportunities provided in university to be more connected to the world of work?

Students should get the best from their teachers through involving in formal and informal learning interactions within the university campus. Students will not only learn more subject knowledge, but also benefit from the teachers' wisdom and life experiences which are beyond the specific subject matter.

Also, students should step out of the campus comfort zone by participating in experiential learning experiences such as internship and exchange programmes to enrich their whole person development. Through these experiences, students can learn to deal with culture shock, cope with a challenging work situation or interpersonal problem, or adapt to unfavourable living conditions. These challenges can allow students to develop problem-solving, communication and organisational skills as well as cultural awareness which are highly valued in the world of work. Experiential learning also allows students to better understand their interests and abilities and in the process cultivate a clearer direction of their career paths.

3. How can students determine a clearer direction regarding their job search or career paths?

Student should develop a good understanding of their interest, skills, values, personality, etc. They should also acquire sufficient knowledge about the world of work and see how they "fit" into different careers and work categories. Besides, students can seek advice from friends, families and teachers and career counsellors but it is important for them to make an informed decision. Reflection on experiential learning experience also plays an important role in integrating the learning into self-understanding and personal meanings which are critical to career development and decision making.

4. Due to changes in Hong Kong's economic structure, career mismatch is becoming more prevalent. How can students strike a balance between their career aspirations and reality?

In real life there is often a gap between reality and the "ideal". Many students would have to make some

compromise in their career and educational plans somewhere along their developmental path. Attaining the "second" choice might not be the end of the world and it would become a "very good" choice if we can adapt and make an effort to make this to become a choice more congruent with our needs and preference.

Students should have the mental preparation to start at a lower level of a career, or to start in a different job position other than what they prefer. Taking a job that is far from one's ideal can become a training ground for one to develop the necessary skills, know-how, understanding of the profession, and career interest to move closer to one's dream careers. A student can also try to "alter" or influence the work environment to create a better fit between self and career.

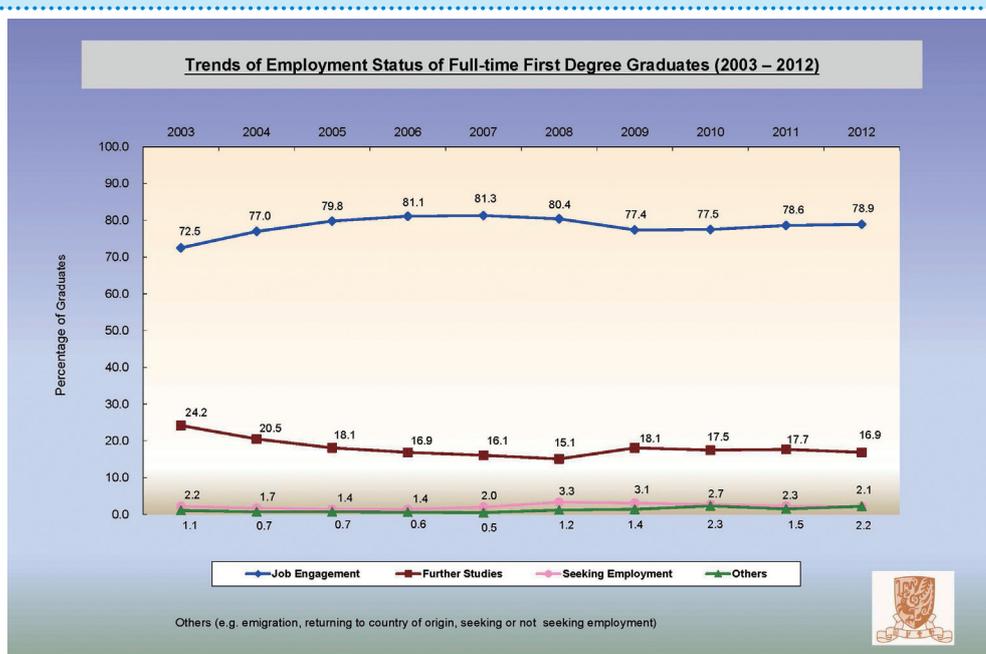
These days, one's job may not necessarily be directly related to his / her major. With good, deliberate planning and careful implementation, students of different majors are more likely to get closer to their career and vocational dreams. It is also important for students to note that life is full of possibilities and career pursuit is only one of the key facets.

5. Based on your personal experiences and research expertise, what tips would you give for our students to benefit from workplace exposure and be successful in career development?

Expand your comfort zone, step out of the campus and see the world. Embrace hardships and challenges with courage and openness. Remember, many successful people started from the lowest positions or tried many different positions before reaching their career and life goals. Wider exposure and better understanding of different work nature and settings will contribute to career attainment and satisfaction.

More importantly, career planning should not be postponed until the final year. It should be an ongoing process and an urgent agenda throughout your university life. Be an early and systematic planner with good understanding of the job market and yourself. Equip yourself with relevant experience and skills through strategic participation in various activities and self-development opportunities.

CU Graduates' Employment Trend

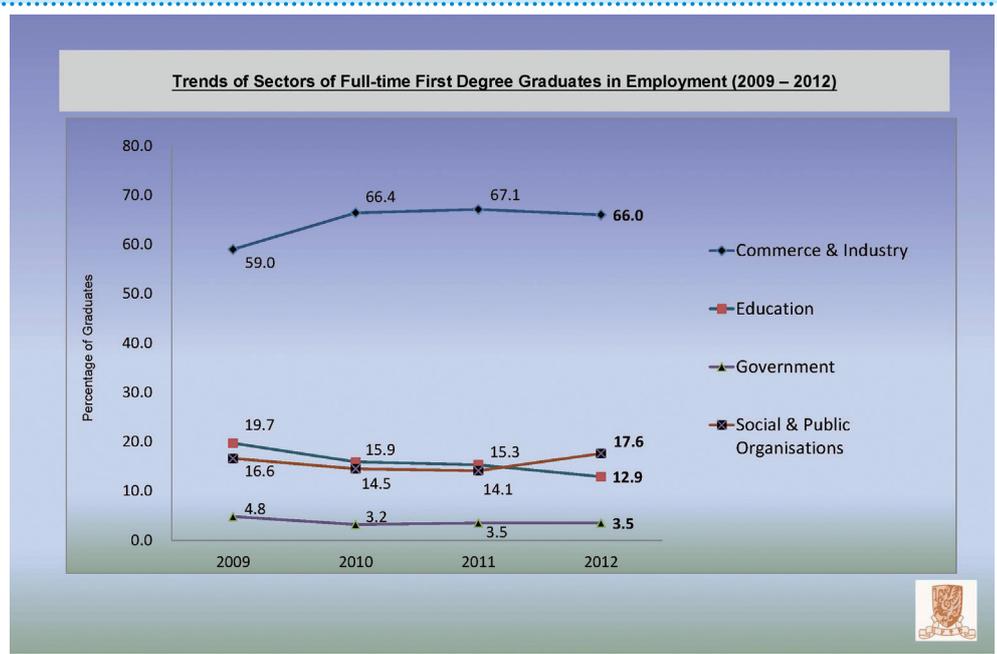


Every year, over 3,000 undergraduate students graduate from our University. The Office of Student Affairs conducts a survey by means of questionnaires and telephone interviews on the employment situation of the University's graduates. Judging from the statistics, the employment situation of our graduates from 2003 - 2012 was highly satisfactory. Over 95% undergraduate students were either employed or pursuing further studies after graduation.

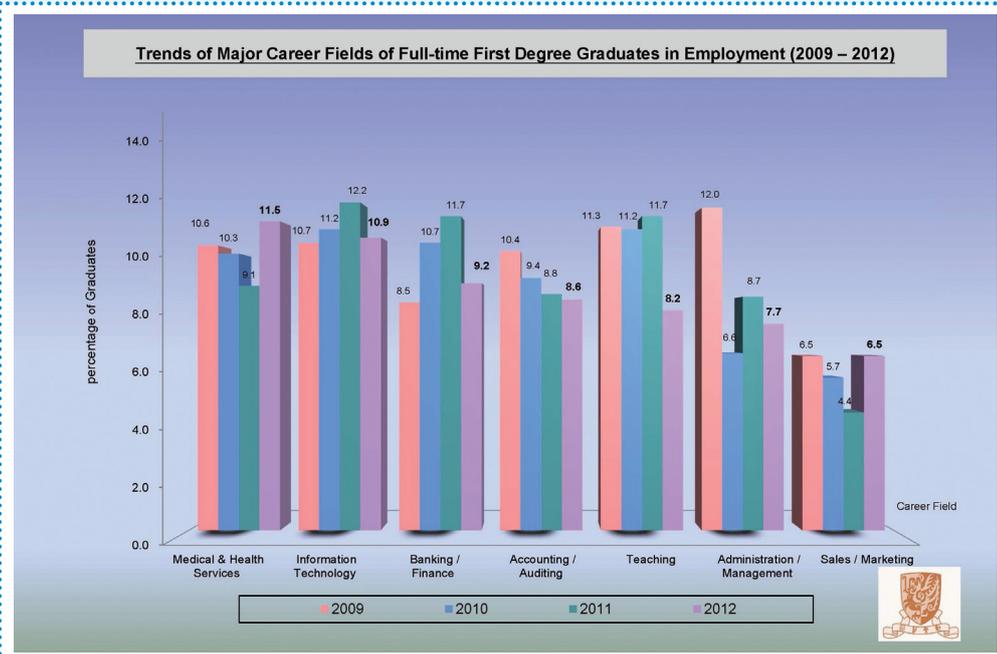
Job Search Process (2009 – 2012)

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average no. of applications sent out	39	32	22	23
Average no. of first interviews attended	7	7	6	6
Average no. of job offers received	2	2	2	2

On average, our students attended seven first interviews and obtained two job offers during their job search process.



In the past few years, the "Commerce and Industry" remained the most popular job sector among our graduates. Over 60% of students joined this sector, followed by social and public organisation (over 15%), education (over 12%) and government (over 3%).



Top seven career fields engaged by our graduates were "Medical & Health Services", "Information Technology", "Banking / Finance", "Accounting / Auditing", "Teaching", "Administration / Management" and "Sales / Marketing".

