

Will an employer programme narrow my child's options?

Schemes such as higher apprenticeships and school leaver programmes are aimed at applicants who know what type of career they want.

If your child takes an 'earning and learning' route at 18 then they will be trained for a specific career. The question of 'how specific?' varies from scheme to scheme. Some of the broadest involve completing placements in different business functions (eg sales, HR, marketing or finance) and studying towards a qualification in 'business' or 'management'. Other programmes lead to one very specific field, eg cyber security or aerospace software development.

Such schemes aren't appropriate if your child doesn't know what career they want. They are also not the best idea if they have several options in mind and wouldn't be able to explore all of them on the programme.

Changing career later on

If a programme includes a degree, then in theory this should be transferable to other careers. There are many entry-level jobs for which a university degree is required, but for which any subject is acceptable. However, your child would need to give convincing reasons as to why they had chosen to train for one career and apply for graduate jobs in another.

As an example, let's say that they completed a sponsored degree programme in software engineering, then applied for graduate roles as a marketing assistant. If they

had helped out with marketing activities at work and found that they enjoyed them, that would be a clear reason for the change of direction and would show that they had experience in marketing on which to base their decision. If they hadn't, they'd need to have fitted in activities related to marketing outside of work, to show they'd tried it and knew they liked it. Here students who'd been to university full time might have the advantage, as they would probably have had more time and opportunity to, say, take a marketing internship in a vacation or been marketing rep for the university summer ball.

Qualifications below degree level are less likely to help if your child wants to change career completely. This is because there isn't really a recruitment market focused on, say, HNC leavers with any subject, whereas there is a recruitment market for graduates who've studied any subject.

It's also worth checking whether programmes that interest your child have a 'tie-in' period – they might be expected to work for the company for a set period of time after finishing their qualifications.

Keeping options open

If your child wants to keep their options open, they could take a degree and explore different careers on the side. They *might* be able to do this on a sponsored degree

programme options?

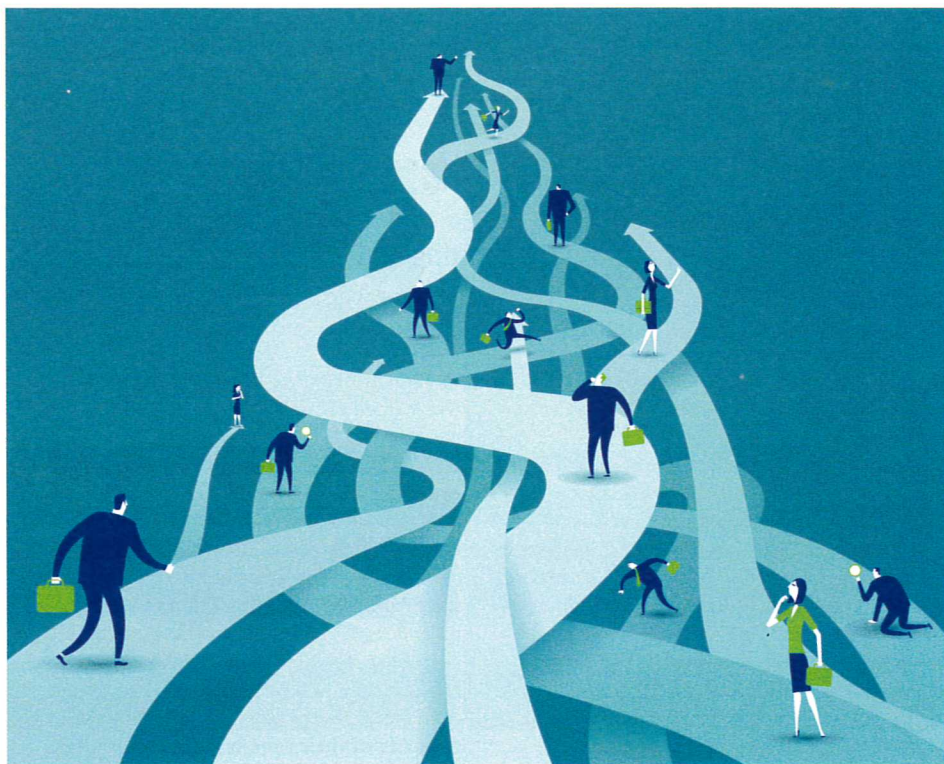
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programme that doesn't involve too much
travel, overtime or studying in their free time.
However, they're more likely to be able to do
this as a full-time student – providing they
don't have to work long hours in a part-time
job or spend several hours a day commuting
to lectures.

For example, a history undergraduate
considering careers in teaching, law or
accountancy might join the university
debating society, stand for election to become
treasurer of the choral society and spend a
morning a week in term time volunteering at
a local school. They might then line up work
experience with schools, law firms and
accountancy firms for their university
vacations, and watch trials at their local court
when they have time.

Of course, if your child goes to university
to keep their options open then they should
consider whether they need to study a
particular subject – see the box below. It's also
worth considering with your child whether
they would realistically have the motivation
to explore different careers on top of their
studies. **T**

More help from TARGETcareers

See targetcareers.co.uk for which careers do
and don't require a specific degree. Look under
'Careers advice', then 'Choices about uni'.