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A degree of uncertainty

One in six students (17 per cent) believe they won't find a job in their chosen career once they leave university according to the ASG Higher Education Student Survey.

The survey discovered one in three undergraduates (32 per cent) have no idea of the career they want to pursue after their studies or have three or more occupations in mind.

The survey of nearly one thousand higher education students also found almost a third (29 per cent) of university students had changed their course during their higher education studies.

The cost of higher education is a major factor which contributes to students' uncertainty. More than half of all higher education students (56 per cent) were either concerned or very concerned about being able to financially cover their course and living expenses.

The ASG Student Survey discovered nearly six out of 10 students rely on their parents for financial support while studying and revealed nearly three quarters of students undertake paid work to make ends meet while studying.

Jaimee Young will complete her Bachelor of Visual Arts course at the University of South Australia in six months and is unsure what she will do when she finishes.

"The degree I've done has prepared me for a job as a professional artist but that's not really what I want to do," Jaimee said.

"It is a very broad course and really offers no career path outside of being a practicing artist.

"I want to work in the arts industry but probably more in production or costuming than actually performing.

"However to do this I would need to do more study or work as a volunteer in the industry for some time."

The survey also revealed fee deregulation would make three in every four students (75 per cent) think twice about continuing their higher education studies.

ASG CEO John Velegrinis said the Higher Education Student Survey proved students are grappling with a range of issues.

"Traditional pathways are changing and students need to adapt to a more flexible and sometimes volatile job market."

"So just because they may complete a pharmacy or an accounting degree doesn't mean they will work as a pharmacist or an accountant. Students will need to think more laterally, take what they have learnt and adapt it to different careers."

Mr Velegrinis said the cost of obtaining a university degree or diploma is another major component and in many cases that burden is also shared by parents.

"Our students are the key to nation building and driving our economy forward, so it is concerning that this uncertainty over cost could stop them pursuing higher education and hold them back from gaining the vital skills and knowledge they need to excel."

Parents and students can use ASG's free online HELP debt calculator, which allows students and parents to model what the total cost of university education could be. By factoring in the cost of interest associated with any debt because of study, students and parents are given a true and holistic picture of the cost of university.

For more information about ASG call 131 ASG (131 274) or visit www.asg.com.au

Editor's notes

ASG specialises in helping parents create educational opportunities for their children and provides a disciplined way for parents to prepare for the cost of their children's primary, secondary and university education, irrespective of their background. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.3 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: www.asg.com.au

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