

The fun is over

Work starts now

A lot of people ask me about the difference between studying and working full-time. Well, let me tell you it is very different. When you're studying, you set your goals and do enough studying to achieve them. Usually you like the subject, so most tasks are interesting. Once you start working though, someone else is managing you, setting your goals and making sure you achieve them. And, if you do, you can be sure they'll make them more difficult the next month!

Another important difference is that when you start work you often have no one below you. Even if you are the best in your class, graduating cum laude* in your subject, you probably have little practical experience in the workplace, so you start at the bottom. And some of the tasks you have to do will be very boring, so it's important you can motivate yourself. In sales, for example, they will often ask you to call old customers. You'll need determination, because you might call many of them without getting any interest, but you still have to be friendly and polite. I know this doesn't sound great but with a can-do attitude you can really start to make progress.

If you get a job in a non-customer facing position, you'll need to be able to work independently. You might be inputting data or preparing reports. Both of these tasks are necessary for your employer but might seem rather dull to you. Nevertheless, you'll need to be both reliable and a problem-solver, while finding the most efficient ways of doing them. Nobody said that work was always exciting!

And for those graduates who are still looking for a job, remember that you are competing with a lot of people every time you apply for a position; you need to make sure your online profile is up-to-date and makes you stand out from the crowd**. Why not try doing some online courses to improve your skills set and to give yourself something different to offer? You should always remember to be flexible. The job you're offered might not be exactly what you're looking for but it's only the first step on a long road.

*cum laude /kʊm 'laʊdeɪ/ (with honours) – if you graduate cum laude, you finish a university degree and are given official praise for special achievement

** stand out from the crowd – to be noticed because you are better than others

1 Read the blogpost and decide if these statements are *true* (T), *false* (F) or *doesn't say* (DS).

- 1 You set your own goals when you're studying and when you start working. ____
- 2 The best graduates might manage people in their first job. ____
- 3 Subject knowledge is important in sales. ____
- 4 Graduates in non-customer facing jobs need to be good at solving problems. ____
- 5 Candidates with much better online profiles usually get the jobs they apply for. ____
- 6 Graduates looking for work should consider additional studying. ____

2 Read the blogpost again and complete the sentences using the words and phrases in the box.

at the bottom can-do attitude determined harder sets the goals stand out

- 1 One main difference between studying and working is that at work another person ____.
- 2 If you achieve your goals, the next ones will be ____.
- 3 Graduates probably have to begin their career ____.
- 4 You need to be ____ if the task takes a lot of time and is boring.
- 5 A(n) ____ is useful if you want to make progress.
- 6 The writer thinks you need to ____ from other candidates for a job.