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Author

EGERTON, Muriel

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Abstract

High rates of return to first degrees have been used to justify increased student financial contributions to higher education. However, no discrete study of rates of return to mature graduates has been carried out although mature graduates now form a significant proportion of the student population. The General Household Survey 1983-1992 was used to examine the earnings of mature graduates compared with those of matriculates. The GHS yielded 616 mature graduate men in full-time work and 296 mature graduate women who were in full-time employment. It was found that the rate of return to mature male graduates was just above one per cent. With recent added costs, new male mature graduates can be forecast to make a sizeable loss on their study. Rates of return to women mature graduates were higher, between five and six per cent, and, based on these figures, the recent increased cost of mature graduate study should be covered by increased earnings. However, these calculations are based on average earnings for the modal age cohort of mature graduates. Those who are older when they complete or earn below the average (a large percentage) will not recoup the costs of study. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)