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The labour market perceptions of high achieving UK university graduates : the role of the first class credential

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Abstract

This article reports the main findings of research examining the labour market perceptions, orientations and experiences of UK university graduates with First Class Honours degrees, the UK's highest level of degree classification. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews with 50 graduates holding a First Class degree, it explores how they perceive the role their credentials served in the competition for jobs and careers. While having a First may give them a positional advantage at the initial stages of recruitment, graduates recognize the importance of such factors as personal capital, soft skills and employability. However important these traits are, in practice, those with First Class degrees orient themselves to the labour market in different ways. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)