



Juggling study and work

“Postgraduate students earn substantially more than the rest of the population”

The trend is towards full-time postgraduate students relying on paid work as their source of income.

With most students working a minimum of 15 hours per week, there are bound to be impacts on their academic performance – or are there?

Students work to provide themselves with the basic necessities of life, gain experience in their area of study, for reasons of independence, to support a lifestyle, or a combination of all of these. Whatever the primary reason is for working and studying, be it economical or social, one common denominator drives all students to work: money!

In an era where petrol prices have sky-rocketed and the cost of food, water and electricity are increasing rapidly, it is not surprising that most students are now turning to the workforce to support their lifestyle.

And we all know the standard of living has increased so to cater for this most students have no choice but to work while studying.

Fortunately, in this day and age, new technologies have emerged which allow greater flexibility and access for postgraduate students currently in the workforce. For instance, distance education seems to be a

growing trend for most postgraduate students, as this allows the flexibility to study in your own time, complete assessments along with the rest of the class, and graduate with your fellow peers. Online forums, web-based unit guides and cheat sheets are another example of learning which was not present in the education sector ten years ago.


Previous generations grew up with the notion that studying and earning a degree was the essence of a good job, while students in this era feel they must work and gain experience before they can land a great job. This is because paid work teaches students to learn that to be successful means to be flexible and adaptive. The focus has shifted from investing in study and moved to finding a job and maintaining a lifestyle.

Nevertheless, each student deals with stress from studying and work in their own way. This determines why some students manage their time wisely and do not drop out of their studies while others may defer their course temporarily or permanently drop out. Those who cope well put long hours into studying, juggle commitments, are well organised, concentrate on assessment tasks rather than wide reading, and sometimes increase or decrease their paid work

hours as study demands change. Others who do not cope so well opt to merely pass, scale down their expectations, frequently miss lectures and classes, work on only some of the subjects they are enrolled in and neglect the others, or constantly shift between full-time and part-time jobs.

This could well and truly explain why most students defer from postgraduate study. After all, why would you want to give up your chance to earn your own money, independence, and no stress from exams and assessments?

The answer is simple. Although a bachelors degree will make you an expert in your chosen profession, a postgraduate degree such as honours, master or a PhD will make you a pro. You will be one of the elite members of the population who has enhanced their knowledge by studying further.

And by furthering your studies you are ultimately investing your future into an account which returns great dividends. Not only are you guaranteed a job, but a great one. Postgraduate students earn substantially more than the rest of the population and the reason for this is simple. They know more so they can charge more for sharing their knowledge. 

Parizad Kotwal

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