



# Universities Are Preparing Students For The Gig Economy And The Future Of Work

Insights

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Universities have often offered courses teaching students how to navigate the workplace and manage their careers. Now, we're starting to see some of these courses focus on teaching students how to best participate in the gig economy.

While the majority of students are interested in pursuing traditional, full-time jobs with a steady employer once they graduate, schools are preparing those interested in opportunities to work as freelancers. In fact, there are already professional learning platforms that allow employers to identify, hire, and retain subject matter experts and professionals who have obtained MBAs and PhD's.

The interest in gig work isn't just related to students' post-graduation plans. College students looking for ways to make extra money while in school and not interfere with their class schedules are able to earn extra money in the spare time by utilizing gig platforms. Courses geared towards the gig economy allow students to explore various types of work opportunities while they are in school. These opportunities include freelancing, mobile work, co-working, and gigs like driving for Uber or becoming an Airbnb host.

Previously, students may have been unaware of the opportunities for highly skilled workers to take advantage of the gig economy or how they could freelance while in college. But now, in addition to studying the history of the gig economy, students learn how to understand and interpret the needs of workers and of companies in this modern field. Additionally, these courses assist students with learning how to communicate, network, and thrive in a variety of work situations.

For example, in 2018, the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business added an undergraduate senior capstone class, "Thriving in the New World of Work," to teach students how to manage workplace environments and their careers. The students use assessments to learn their strengths, values, and passions in the gig economy, how to navigate uncertainty, and create new opportunities.

Students can also receive advice on gig work at their schools' career services center. Typically, career development centers are designed to prepare students to land jobs at traditional for-profit employers and if a student wanted to work at a nonprofit or smaller startup, they were mostly on their own. However, career service centers are now assisting students with learning about gig opportunities and freelance work.

Hopefully, students will not only learn how to get contract work, create side hustles, and market themselves in the gig economy, but also learn how to improve the gig economy for freelancers and the companies who hire them.

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