

Sir,

It was not a surprise to learn (*Graduate employment: A higher price to pay for learning*, *Times* 9 Dec 2010) that medicine and dentistry are top of the employment table, but I was rather taken aback to see mathematical sciences bottom, with only 56.5% in employment six months after graduation. A closer look at the data is, however, illuminating. The source data, from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), also show that less than 10% of the mathematicians were unemployed. Missing are the graduates who go on to further study, and for mathematical sciences this is a considerable number. Interestingly, the average salary of mathematicians when they enter employment is high, after either a first or further degree: indeed after a postgraduate qualification it is the highest earning subject, beating even medicine and dentistry. (Note to Editor: HESA data, page 94 of *One step beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education* <http://www.bis.gov.uk/one-step-beyond>).

Young people with an aptitude and interest in the subject will find university mathematics to be beautiful, challenging and extraordinarily stimulating. They should be reassured that, in addition, it is a subject that underpins our 21st century technology, economy and society, and is recognised as such in the employment market.

Professor Frank Kelly FRS

(Chair, Council for the Mathematical Sciences)

On behalf of

Professor Michael Walker, Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

Professor Angus MacIntyre FRS, London Mathematical Society

Professor David Hand, FBA, Royal Statistical Society

Dr Penny Davies, Edinburgh Mathematical Society

Professor Richard Eglese, Operational Research Society

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