

A BIT ON THE SIDE?

You need money, but uni takes up all your time and brain power. Right? Wrong. Find a job with a little help from FD

Words: Joanne Christie

» Juggling the demands of university life can be a struggle. Throw in a part-time job, and time management can become a real problem.

But, despite the pressures of working while studying, around 40% of students in the UK work during term time, according to the Royal Bank of Scotland's Student Living Index 2007. The report found that the traditional student gigs of bar and shop jobs remained the most popular, and that, on average, students were

docking up around 15 hours per week. Giving up 15 hours a week to part-time work may not sound like that much, but there may be times the regular commitment proves overwhelming and you find yourself compromising your studies for the sake of a job. If you really need to supplement your income, keep reading for some commitment-free alternatives that could help you make a bit of extra money without imposing too many obligations on your already-stretched time.

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Mystery shopping

You won't earn a mint by mystery shopping, but you can probably get some of the things you need (or want) for nothing, and a small fee for reporting on your experience. Plus, it's easy to find work through mystery shopping companies, such as Retail Eyes (www.retaileyes.co.uk). Sign up online, and choose assignments local to your area.

Simon Boydell, marketing manager for Retail Eyes, says there are plenty of students on the books: "It's a great opportunity for students because there is no time, you just do it when you can. And it has added value, especially for business students, as it can give them an insight into market research. They gain a bit of an understanding about what some of the UK's largest retailers look for when it comes to customer experience, and they start recognising how companies measure themselves."

Typically, you'll get a spending limit, which is reimbursed, and an assignment fee for reporting on the customer service you received. Pubs, gyms and restaurants regularly use mystery shoppers, so it's a good way to cut down on your leisure expenses, as well as score a bit of extra cash.

Market research

Ever been approached by someone

in a local store asking if you're aged between 18 and 25? Don't be too quick to tell them where to go; they may be trying to sign you up for paid market research.

It doesn't take long, is easy work, and you get paid nicely for it. Look out for people with clipboards in stores or venues you frequent, and also keep an eye out for signs or advertisements in local papers, on websites or noticeboards, asking for people to get involved.

Be a guinea pig

A couple of years ago I signed up to take part in a medical trial while taking a journalism course.

Although the idea of being a guinea pig was a little daunting, my particular trial was to assess how the contraceptive pill worked alongside another, already approved drug. Since both drugs were already being taken regularly by patients, I figured I had little to worry about. I had to go to about 15 outpatient visits, and stay overnight in the facility twice, but for this I was paid £2,000, around the same amount of money as working for, say, 15 or 20 hours a week in a bar job throughout my entire course.

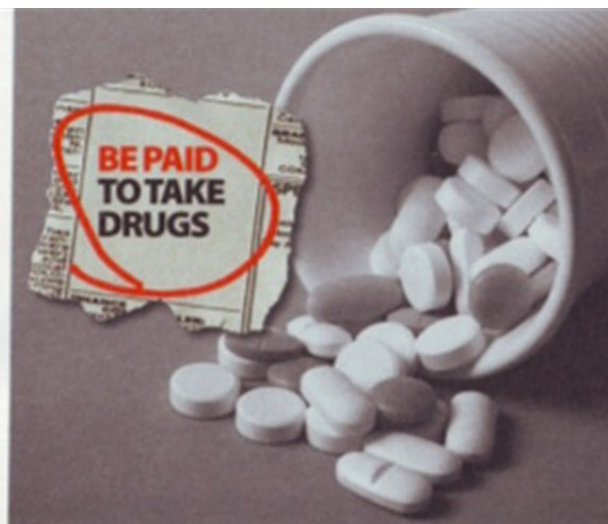
It wasn't the best experience I've ever had; I had a few side effects, and, frankly, having so many blood tests was a bit draining. But it didn't interfere

with my studies, left me free to do relevant work experience instead of actually having to work, and although it required being somewhere at a certain time, it wasn't actually what you'd consider work. There was lots of waiting around, but I just took a book and studied, and especially during overnight stays, I managed to cram in a lot of revision.

Students are good candidates for drug trials, according to Charlotte Taylor of Quintiles, an international research company that conducts trials in London. "They are good for medical trials because they are healthy and young, and they can do it because they have the flexibility of time," she explains.

As well as financial compensation, Taylor points out that participants also receive a very thorough medical examination prior to being accepted for the trial, and the knowledge they are contributing to the development of new, lifesaving medicines.

If you're not keen on taking new drugs, you could opt for the less invasive (although also less lucrative) options of psychological tests, donating blood for research or sperm donation, all of which can offer small fees or incentives.



HANDY HINTS

When signing up for a trial, consider the possible side effects carefully: remember that all drugs have potential side effects, whether they're new or not.

Clarify exactly how and when you'll be paid from the outset. Find out what happens if you withdraw from a study. You should be paid in full if your

withdrawal is due to side effects, but if it's for personal reasons, you may not be paid at all.

Drug trials are frequently advertised in local and student publications, on www.quizze.com or www.trials-us.co.uk. You could also ask around at your university to see if any trials are being undertaken on site.



OTHER OPTIONS

If you're keen to go down the bar or shop work route, finding a job shouldn't be too difficult: simply drop off your CV at businesses in your area, look out for 'staff wanted' signs, or check out local newspapers and websites for advertisements.

Another avenue is that many companies look for student brand managers to promote

their firms around campus. Check out www.thebidirection.co.uk for more info.

Some students can make a buck as TV or film extras or as models, but do your research before signing up with an agency. Beware of companies that approach you on the street, trying to get you to sign up for expensive portfolios; they are often dodgy.

