As rain hammers on the roof of the crowded careers fair marquee on the Queen's Lawn, a pen from a prospective employer promises to do little to shelter me from the downpour. But should it give me hope for when I leave Imperial? If they're handing out free pens and umbrellas to protect me from the rain, that free pen may be overvalued – 89 per cent of careers fair marquee on the Queen's Lawn, I spoke to an alumnus who would claim that it’s just a coincidence that they happen to be wearing a suit and tie. Those of us who chose to stay in academia just a little longer will have to leave its warm embrace eventually, and while it didn’t protect me from the rain, that free pen will come in handy when I start filling in job applications of my own. Those who went on from Imperial straight into jobs or PhD study were the ones who had numerous internships under their belt, or had spent summer holidays working in the lab. As for the rest of us, some rays of sunshine are beginning to peek through the clouds. Some of my classmates are back with their parents for now, but as the interviews trickle in they are inching closer to their first, proper job. Imperial students talk about the old-style ‘mill hand’ sound as if it were a myth or legend. Though it still exists, these days it is the employers who have pick of the students, not the other way around. Today, most students frequenting Imperial’s careers fair will say they’re ‘networking’ with the people meaning the

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Stalls. The marquees are awash with students who would claim that it’s just a coincidence that they happen to be wearing a suit and carrying a stack of freshly printed CVs on the day of a fair. You will often see these same people trying to strike up a casual conversation with a potential employer which, in reality, looks anything but casual. Alongside seasoned careers fair patrons are the more sceptical punters, unconvinced that the event supports their cause, who are using it to gather enough free stationary to see them through revision instead. Regardless of the approach taken at a careers fair, getting an interview is a marathon affair. Meeting the challenge requires hours of online assessments, application form filling and CV tweaking, not forgetting all those extra curricular activities you should be doing too. A degree is no longer enough.

In our final year, instead of dreams of job offers spreading through lecture theatres, those who had received good news announcements on Facebook. Congratulations were offered in the same way; giving others yet to taste success a computer screen behind which they could hide their jalousy. "If you've gone on from Imperial straight into jobs or PhD study were the ones who had numerous internships under their belt, or had spent summer holidays working in the lab. As for the rest of us, some rays of sunshine are beginning to peek through the clouds. Some of my classmates are back with their parents for now, but as the interviews trickle in they are inching closer to their first, proper job. Imperial students talk about the old-style ‘mill hand’ sound as if it were a myth or legend. Though it still exists, these days it is the employers who have pick of the students, not the other way around. Today, most students frequenting Imperial’s careers fair will say they’re ‘networking’ with the people meaning the

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