



## CEPEO Working Paper No. 25-01

# Inequalities in Access to Professional Occupations

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Previous research has shown that disadvantaged young people are less likely to work in professional occupations than their advantaged peers, even when they have achieved the same level of education. Yet until now little has been known about the reasons for this - are they applying for professional entry-level roles and not being hired, or are they not applying in the first place? Using unique recruitment data from 17 large employers' entry programmes, we answer this question for the first time. We find that applicants from lower socio-economic and ethnic minority groups are well represented among the applicant pool, but disproportionately do not receive job offers, even when considering similar applicants. While much of the gap can be explained by prior attainment, there are still large socio-economic gaps in offer rates within university groups. Women are typically underrepresented in the applicant pool across entry routes but are more likely to achieve a job offer than otherwise similar men, among those who do apply.

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