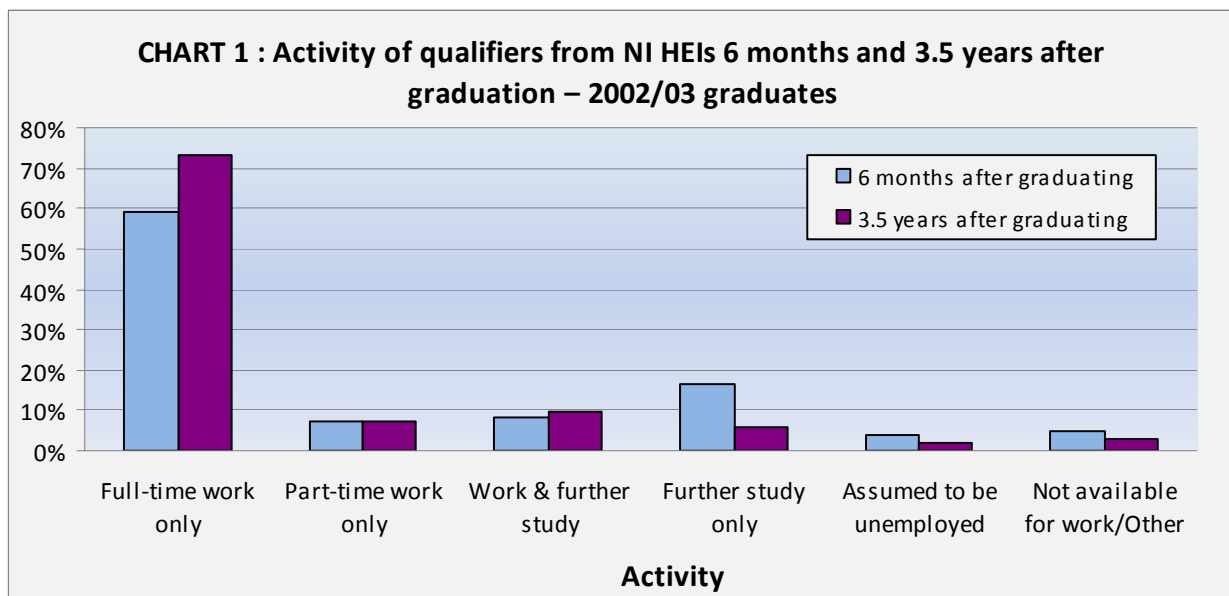


Statistical Bulletin

Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education: Longitudinal Survey of 2002/03 graduates three and a half years on – Northern Ireland Analysis

DECEMBER 2008

This Statistical Bulletin presents Northern Ireland (NI) specific analysis from the ‘Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Longitudinal Survey of 2002/03 graduates – three and a half years on’. The Bulletin reports on qualifiers from NI Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and NI domiciled qualifiers from UK HEIs. This survey was carried out among the cohort of students who completed a HE course at a UK HEI in 2002/03. Qualifiers were first surveyed six months after graduation and then again three and a half years after graduation in the winter of 2006/2007. The aim of the surveys was to collect information on the activities of students after graduating. The second survey also questioned students on their HE experience and satisfaction levels with their career. This Bulletin focuses on the results from the second survey. However, some comparisons have been made between the results of the two surveys.



KEY POINTS

Qualifiers from NI HEIs

- Approximately 80% of qualifiers from NI HEIs were in 'full-time work only' or 'part-time work only', three and a half years after graduation. This has increased from 66% at six months after graduation.
- Only 2% of qualifiers from NI HEIs are 'assumed to be unemployed', compared to 4% at six months.
- The proportion of qualifiers in each activity, three and a half years after graduation was broadly similar for qualifiers from NI, English, Scottish and Welsh HEIs.
- Approximately 87% of employed NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs were working in NI three and a half years after graduation, compared to 92% at six months. Only 21% of non NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs in employment were employed in NI, similar to the proportion at six months after graduation.
- Of those qualifiers from NI HEIs in employment, almost 81% were employed in a 'graduate' job, three and a half years after graduation (74% at six months).
- Approximately 86% of qualifiers from NI HEIs said they were 'Very satisfied' or 'Fairly satisfied' with their career, three and a half years after graduation.

NI Domiciled qualifiers from UK HEIs (including NI)

- Three and half after graduation, approximately 80% of NI domiciled qualifiers from UK HEIs were in 'full-time work only' or 'part-time work only'. This has increased from 66% at six months after graduation.
- Only 2% of NI domiciled qualifiers from UK HEIs are 'assumed to be unemployed', compared to 4% at six months.
- Approximately 87% of NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs in employment were working in NI, three and a half years after graduation, compared to 92% at six months. Approximately 50% of NI domiciled qualifiers from GB HEIs in employment were employed in NI, an increase from 43% at six months.
- Over 80% of NI domiciled graduates in employment were working in a 'graduate' job, three and a half years after graduation (73% at six months).
- Just less than 86% of NI domiciled qualifiers reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their career, three and a half years after graduation.

SECTION 1 : QUALIFIERS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This section presents the findings for qualifiers who graduated from a NI HEI in 2002/03. Over 90% of these qualifiers are domiciled in NI. Differences between subgroups reported in this Section are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level¹. Tables relating to this section can be found in Annex 1.

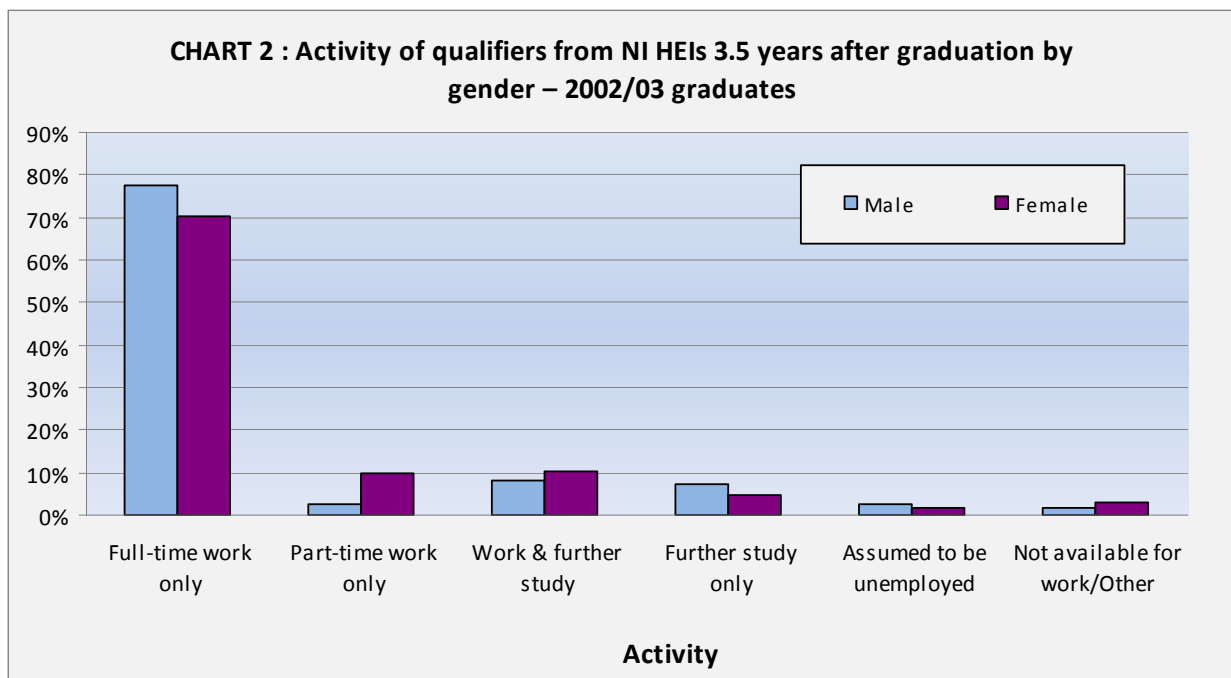
1.1 ACTIVITY THREE AND HALF YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

1.1.1 All Qualifiers (Table 1, Chart 1)

Three and a half years after graduation 80% of qualifiers from NI HEIs were in ‘full-time work only’ or ‘part-time work only’. This has increased from 66% at six months after graduation. A further 10% of qualifiers were combining ‘work and further study’ compared to 8% at six months. There has been a decrease in the proportion of qualifiers who are in ‘further study only’, with only 6% in this category, compared to 16% at six months. Only 2% of qualifiers were ‘assumed to be unemployed’, down from 4% at six months.

1.1.2 Gender (Table 1, Chart 2)

A greater percentage of males (78%) were in ‘full-time work only’, compared to 70% of females. At six months, 59% of males and 60% of females were in ‘full-time work only’. Conversely, a larger percentage of females (10%) were in ‘part-time work only’, compared to 3% of males. At six months 8% of females and 5% of males were in ‘part-time work only’.



¹ See notes to readers parts 9 o 13

1.1.3 Level of qualification obtained (Table 2)

Graduates with an Other Undergraduate² qualification were less likely to be in ‘full-time work only’ (58%), than First Degree (73%) or Postgraduate (77%) qualifiers. However, they were more likely to be in ‘part-time work only’ (13%), compared to 6% of First Degree qualifiers or 7% of Postgraduate qualifiers. A larger proportion of Other Undergraduate qualifiers were in ‘further study only’ (11%), compared to only 2% of Postgraduate qualifiers.

1.1.4 Mode of study (Table 3)

A larger proportion of graduates who studied full-time were in ‘full-time work only’ (74%), compared to 69% of graduates who studied part-time. Conversely, a larger proportion of part-time graduates were in ‘part-time work only’ (12%), compared to 5% of full-time graduates.

1.1.5 GB Comparison (Table 4)

The proportion of qualifiers from NI HEIs in ‘full-time work only’ or ‘part-time work only’, three and a half years after graduation, was on a par with qualifiers from English, Scottish and Welsh HEIs. In fact, the proportion of qualifiers in each activity, three and a half years after graduation, was broadly similar for each of the UK countries.

1.2 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

1.2.1 Location of Employment (Table 5)

Overall, 82% of qualifiers from NI HEIs in employment were working in NI, three and a half years after graduation.

Approximately 87% of employed NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs were working in NI three and a half years after graduation. This is lower than at the six months stage when 92% of this group were employed in NI. Only 1 in 5 (21%) non NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs in employment were employed in NI. This is similar to the proportion six months after graduation.

1.2.2 Type of Job – Graduate or Non Graduate³ (Table 6)

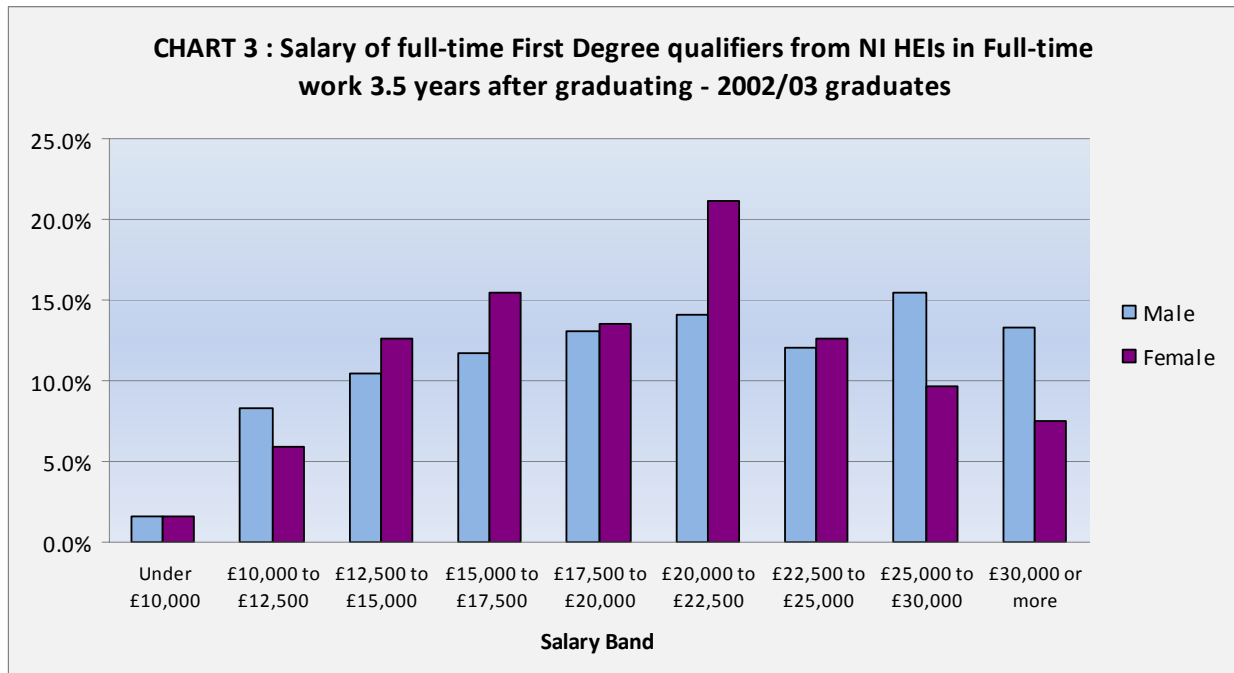
The majority (81%) of employed graduates from NI HEIs were employed in ‘graduate’ jobs three and a half years after graduation. This compares to 74% six months after graduation. Qualifiers with a Postgraduate qualification were more likely (92%) to be in a ‘graduate’ job than First Degree qualifiers (77%).

² See notes to readers part 19

³ See notes to readers part 22

1.2.3 Salary (Table 7, Chart 3)

The median salary of full-time First Degree qualifiers from NI HEIs in full-time work three and a half years after graduation was £20,000. Qualifiers with full-time Postgraduate qualifications had a median salary of £23,998. There was no clear evidence to suggest that a significant difference exists between the average salary of males and females for both full-time First Degree and full-time Postgraduate qualifiers in full-time work.

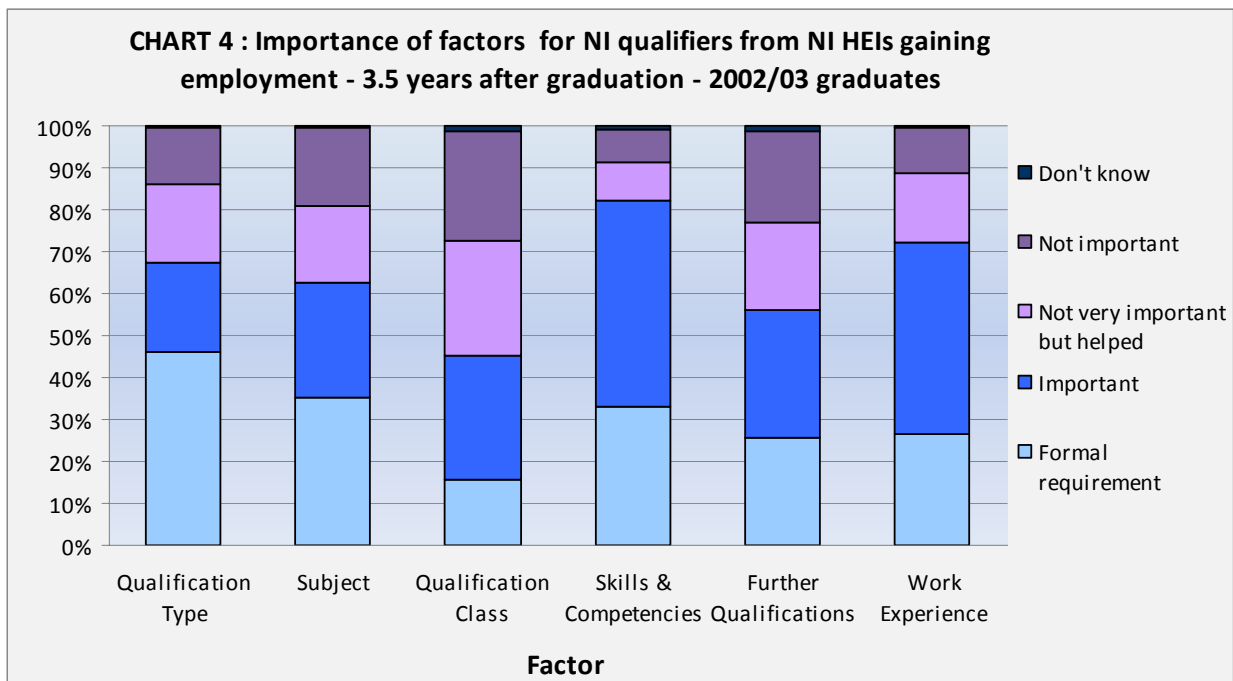


There was, however, a difference between the distribution of salaries of male and female full-time First Degree qualifiers, with a larger proportion of males in the higher salary bands.

1.2.4 Factors in gaining employment (Table 8, Chart 4)

Qualifiers who were in employment were asked to rate the importance of various factors in gaining that employment, on a scale ranging from 'a formal requirement' to 'not important'.

Qualification type was more likely than other factors to have been rated as a 'formal requirement', with 46% of graduates reporting this to be the case, while a further 21% said it was 'important'. Around a third of graduates (35%) said that *subject studied* and *evidence of skills and competencies* were 'formal requirements', with a further 27% and 49% respectively rating them as 'important'. More than a quarter of graduates (27%) rated *relevant work experience* and *further qualifications obtained* as 'formal requirements', with 46% and 30% respectively rating them as 'important'. Only 16% of graduates rated *class of qualification* as a 'formal requirement', but a further 30% thought that it was 'important'.

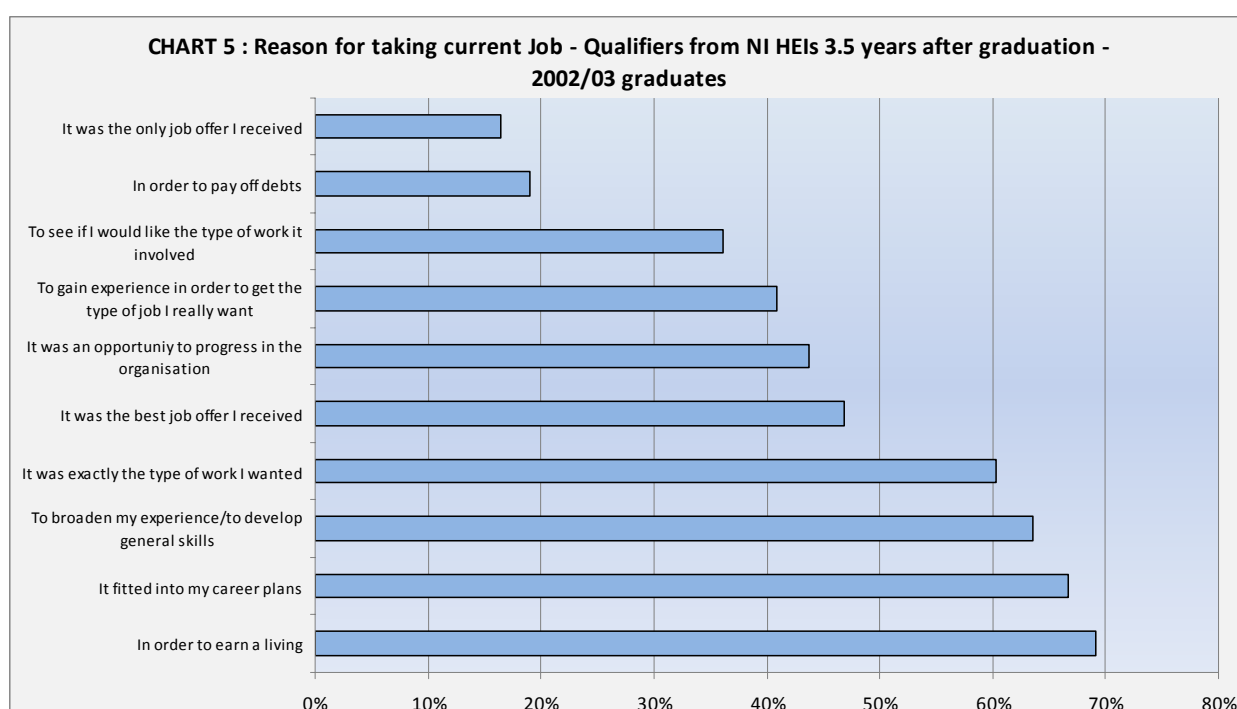


1.2.5 Reasons for taking current job (Table 9, Chart 5)

Qualifiers in employment were also asked to identify all the reasons that helped them in the decision to choose their current job.

The most common reasons given for taking their current job, were, 'In order to earn a living', 'It fitted in to my career plans', 'To broaden my experience/to develop general skills' and 'It was exactly the type of work I wanted' with between 60% and 70% of NI domiciled qualifiers citing these as motivations.

Other popular reasons, reported by between 40% and 50% of qualifiers were, 'It was the best job offer I received', 'It was an opportunity to progress in the organisation' and 'To gain experience in order to get the type of job I really wanted'.



1.2.6 How did you find out about your current job? (Table 10)

Employed qualifiers were then asked to identify all the sources that helped them find out about their current job.

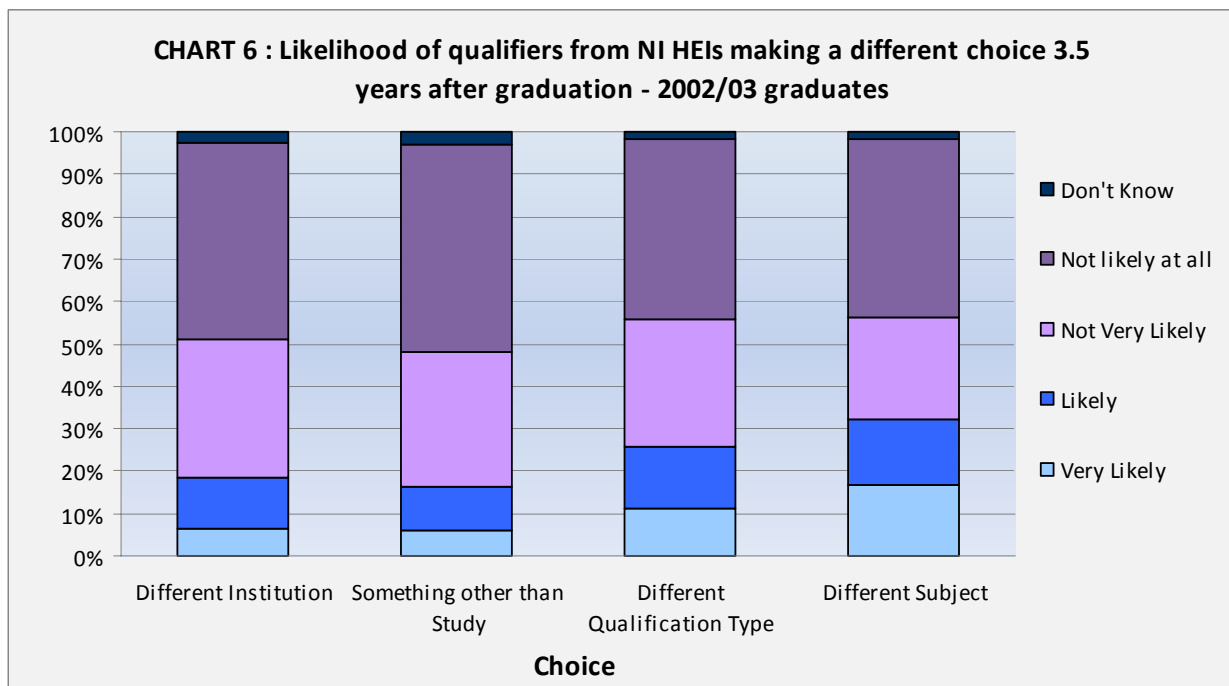
The most common source for finding a job was a 'Newspaper/magazine advert or its website', with 47% of qualifiers from NI HEIs reporting this category. This was followed by 'Personal Contacts' (23%), 'Already/previously worked for organisation' (18%) and 'Employers website' (12%). Other sources quoted are listed in Table 10.

1.3 SATISFACTION

Qualifiers were asked to think about their Higher Education experience and how likely they would be to make different choices if they could do it all again. They were then asked to rate their overall satisfaction level with their career to date.

1.3.1 Likelihood of making different choices (Table 11, Chart 6)

Around 1 in 6 graduates (16%) said that they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to *do something other than training, study or research*. A similar proportion of graduates (19%) said that they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to *study at a different institution*. Around 1 in 4 graduates (26%) said they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to *work toward a different type of qualification* and 1 in 3 (32%) reported that they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to *choose a different subject*.



1.3.2 Satisfaction with Career to date (Table 12)

Three and a half years after graduations 86% of qualifiers said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their career to date. 11% reported that they were 'not very satisfied' and 4% said they were 'not satisfied at all'.

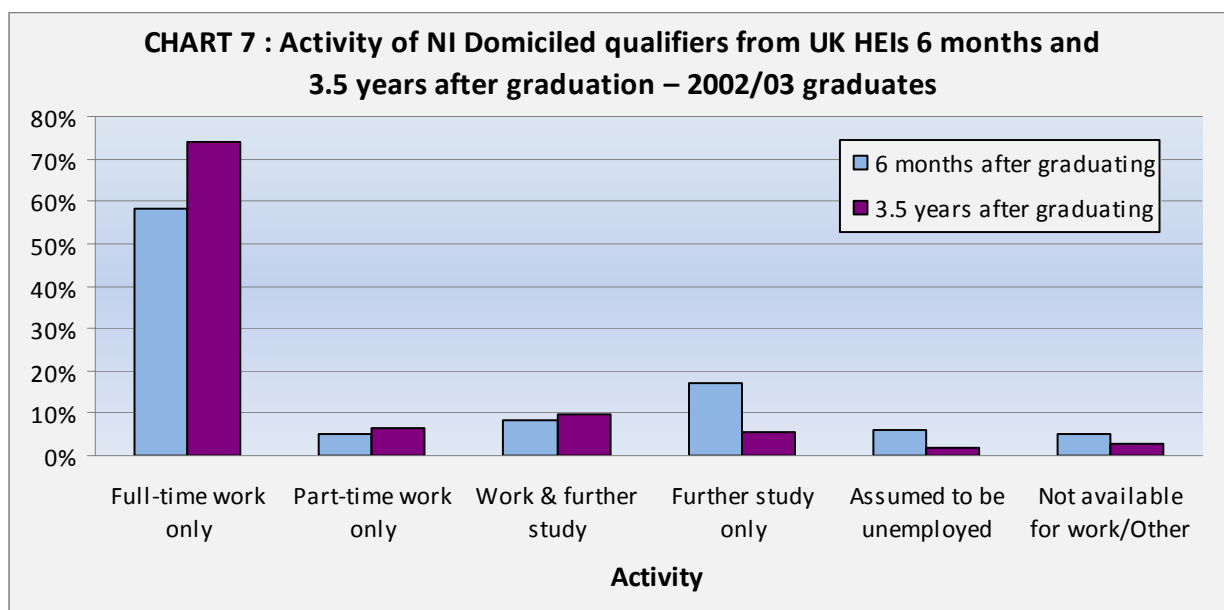
SECTION 2 : NORTHERN IRELAND DOMICILED QUALIFIERS FROM UK (INCLUDING NI) HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This section presents the findings for qualifiers domiciled in NI who graduated from a UK HEI in 2002/03. Over 75% of these qualifiers graduated from a NI HEI. Differences between subgroups reported in this Section are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level¹. Tables relating to this section can be found in Annex 1.

2.1 ACTIVITY THREE AND HALF YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

2.1.1 All Qualifiers (Table 13, Chart 7)

Three and a half years after graduation, 80% of NI domiciled qualifiers from UK HEIs were in 'full-time work only' or 'part-time work only', an increase from the 66% who were in these categories six months after graduation. A further 10% of qualifiers were 'combining work and further study' (9% at six months) and 5% were in 'further study only' (16% at six months). Only 2% of qualifiers were 'assumed to be unemployed' (4% at six months).



2.1.2 Gender (Table 13)

Males (78%) were more likely to have been in 'full-time work only' compared to females (71%). At 6 months 58% of males and 59% of females were in 'full-time work only'. Conversely, 9% of females were in 'part-time work only' compared to 2% of males. At six months 9% of females and 5% of males were in 'part-time work only'.

¹ See notes to readers parts 9 o 13

2.1.3 Level of qualification obtained (Table 14)

Three and half years after graduation, 57% of qualifiers from Other Undergraduate² courses were in 'full-time work only'. This is lower than qualifiers from First Degree (74%) or Postgraduate (78%) courses. However, a larger proportion of Other Undergraduate qualifiers were in 'part-time work only' (14%), compared to 6% of both First Degree and Postgraduate qualifiers. Only 2% of Postgraduate qualifiers were in 'further study only' compared to 9% of Other Undergraduate qualifiers.

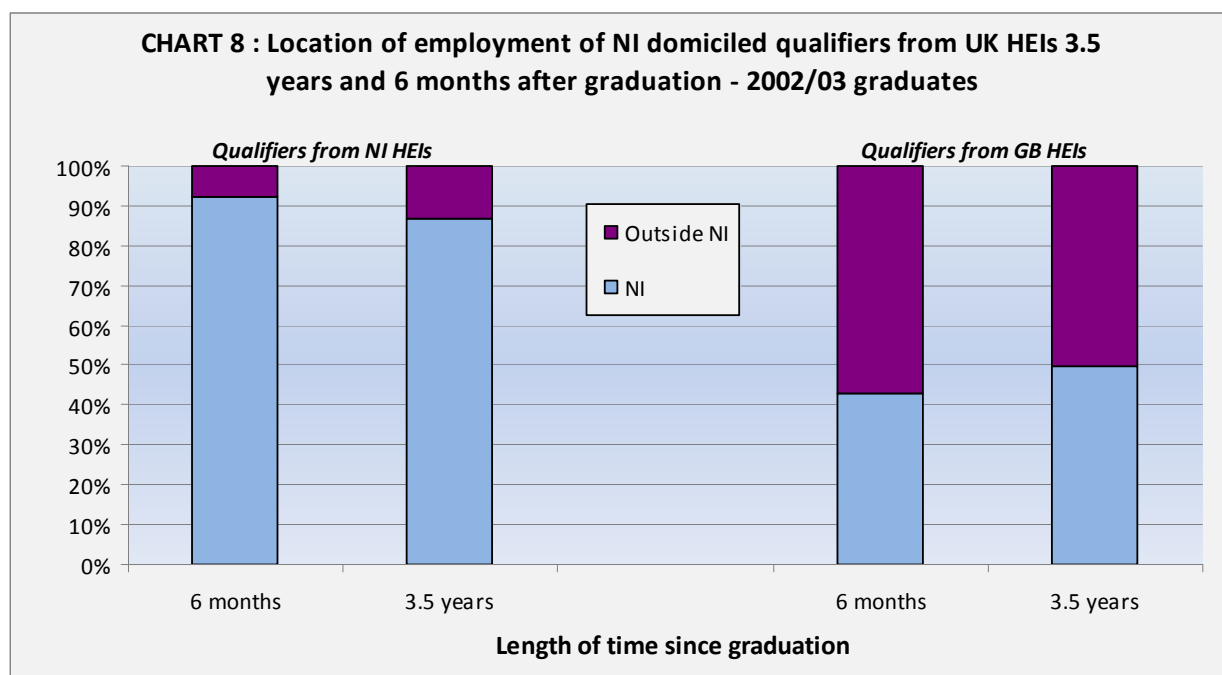
2.1.4 Mode of study (Table 15)

The proportion of part-time qualifiers in 'full-time work only' and 'part-time work only' is 69% and 12% respectively. This differs for full-time qualifiers of whom 75% were in 'full-time work only' and 5% were in 'part-time work only'. Around 6% of full-time qualifiers were in 'further study only' compared to only 2% of part-time qualifiers. A larger proportion of part-time qualifiers compared to full-time qualifiers were 'not available for employment', with figures of 4% and 1% respectively.

2.2 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

2.2.1 Location of Employment (Table 16, Chart 8)

Of those NI domiciled qualifiers in employment, approximately 79% were employed in NI three and a half years after graduation. NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs in employment were more likely to be employed in NI (87%) than NI domiciled qualifiers from GB HEIs (50%) three and a half years after graduation. At six months after graduation 92% of NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs and 43% of NI domiciled qualifiers from GB HEIs were employed in NI.



² See notes to readers part 19

2.2.2 Type of Job³ (Table 17)

Approximately 80% of NI domiciled qualifiers, in employment, were in a 'graduate' job three and a half years after graduation, compared to 73% at six months after graduation.

Postgraduate qualifiers, in employment, were more likely to be in a 'graduate' job (91%) three and a half years after graduation than First Degree (77%) or Other Undergraduate (69%) qualifiers. Around 86% of part-time qualifiers in employment were in a 'graduate' job. This is a higher than the proportion of employed full-time qualifiers, of whom 79% were in a 'graduate' job, three and a half years after graduation.

2.2.3 Salary (Table 18)

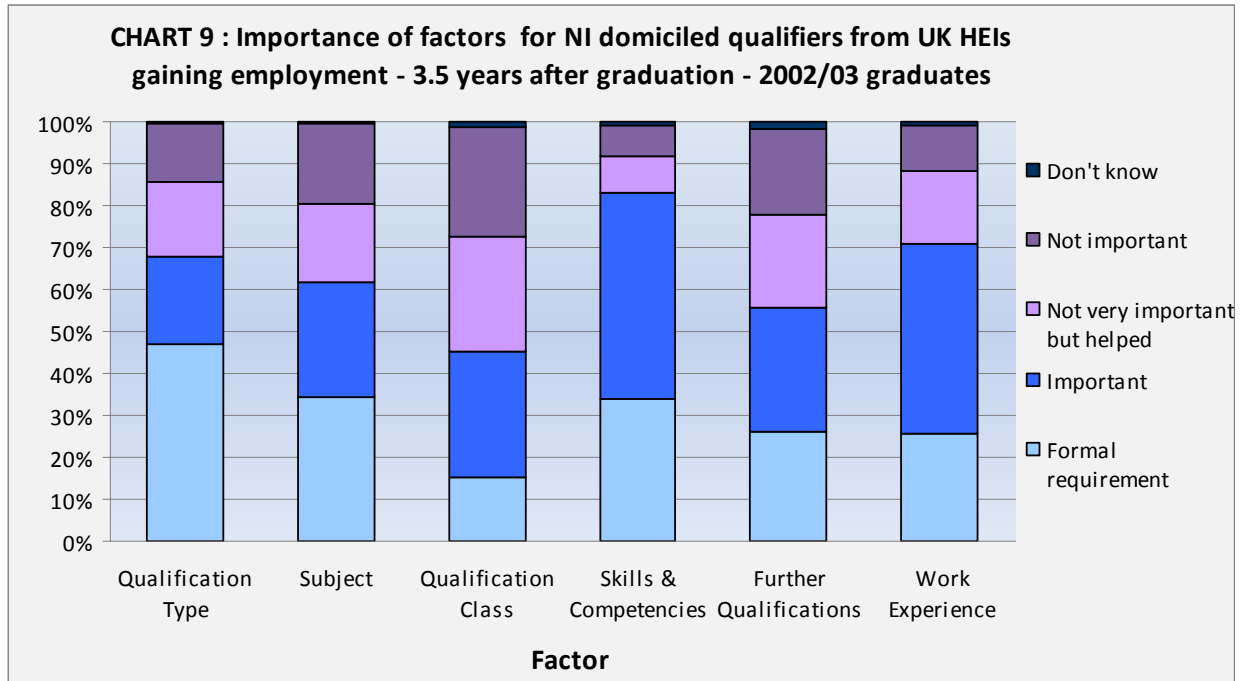
The median salary of NI domiciled full-time First Degree qualifiers from UK HEIs, in 'full-time work only', was £20,000, three and half years after graduation. This is less than full-time Postgraduate qualifiers in 'full-time work only', whose median salary was £24,000.

There was no clear evidence to suggest that a significant difference exists between the average salary of males and females, for both full-time First Degree and full-time Postgraduate qualifiers in full-time work. However, there was a difference between the distribution of salaries of male and female full-time First Degree qualifiers, with a larger proportion of males in the higher salary bands.

³ See notes to readers part 22

2.2.4 Factors in gaining employment (Table 19, Chart 9)

Graduates who were in employment were asked to rate the importance of various factors in gaining that employment, on a scale ranging from 'a formal requirement' to 'not important'.



Qualification type was more likely than other factors to have been rated as a 'formal requirement', with 47% of graduates reporting this to be the case, while a further 21% said it was 'important'. Around a third of graduates (35%) said that *subject studied* and *evidence of skills and competencies* were 'formal requirements', with a further 27% and 49% respectively, rating them as 'important'. Approximately a quarter of graduates (26%) rated *relevant work experience* and *further qualifications obtained* as 'formal requirements', with 45% and 30% respectively, rating them as 'important'. Only 15% of graduates rated *class of qualification* as a 'formal requirement', with a further 30% rating it as 'important'.

2.2.5 Reasons for taking current job (Table 20)

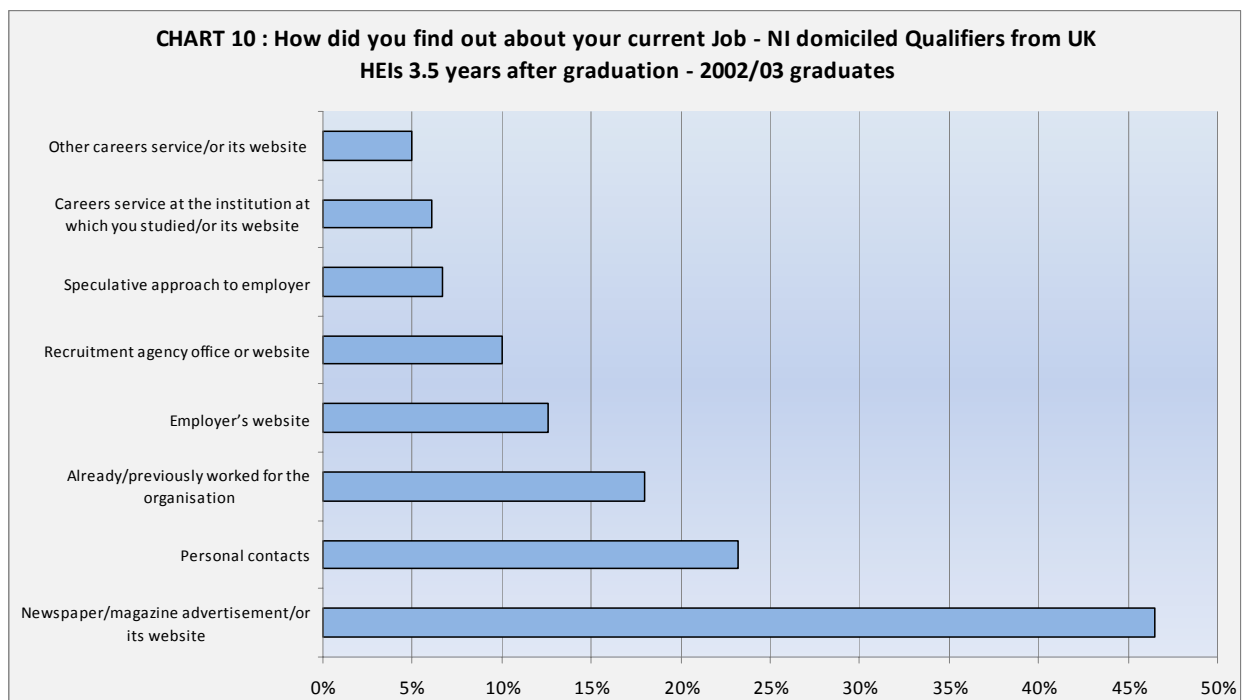
Qualifiers in employment were also asked to identify all the reasons that helped them in the decision to choose their current job.

The most common reasons given for taking their current job, were, 'In order to earn a living', 'It fitted in to my career plans', 'To broaden my experience/to develop general skills' and 'It was exactly the type of work I wanted' with between 60% and 70% of NI domiciled qualifiers citing these as motivations.

Other popular reasons, reported by between 40% and 50% of qualifiers were, 'It was the best job offer I received', 'It was an opportunity to progress in the organisation' and 'To gain experience in order get the type of job I really wanted'. Other reasons reported are listed in Table 20.

2.2.6 How did you find out about your current job? (Table 21, Chart 10)

Employed qualifiers were then asked to identify all the sources that helped them find out about their current job.



The main source used by NI domiciled qualifiers in finding their current job was a 'Newspaper/magazine advertisement/or its website' with almost half (47%) quoting this category. 'Personal Contacts' were important for 23% of qualifiers, while almost 1 in 5 qualifiers (18%) 'Already or previously worked for the organisation'. One in ten (10%) qualifiers cited a 'Recruitment agency office or website' and 13% reported that they used the 'Employer's website' to find their current job.

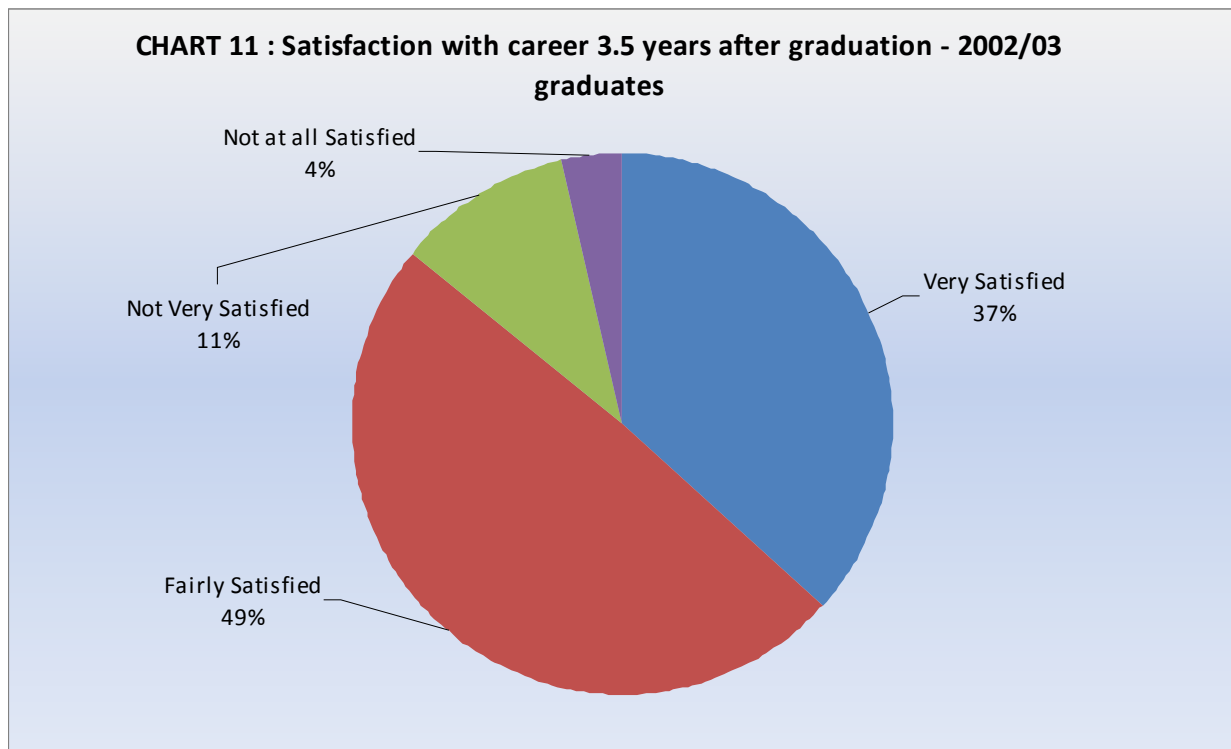
2.3 SATISFACTION

Qualifiers were asked to think about their Higher Education experience and how likely they would be to make different choices if they could do it all again. They were then asked to rate their overall satisfaction level with their career to date.

2.3.1 Likelihood of making different choices (Table 22)

If NI domiciled qualifiers had the opportunity to make their choices again around a third (32%) said they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to *choose a different subject*; a quarter (25%) would *work towards a different type of qualification*; around 1 in 6 (16%) said they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to *do something other than training, study or research* and a similar proportion (18%) said they would *study at different institution*.

2.3.2 Satisfaction with Career to date (Table 23, Chart 11)



Around 86% of NI domiciled qualifiers from UK HEIs said that they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their career to date, three and a half years after graduation. One in ten (11%) qualifiers reported that they were 'not very satisfied' and 4% said they were 'not at all satisfied'.

NI domiciled female qualifiers were more likely to be 'very satisfied' with their career to date than males, with figures of 39% and 33% respectively.

NOTES TO READERS

Background

1. This Statistical Bulletin has been produced by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and presents Northern Ireland (NI) specific analysis from the 'Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Longitudinal Survey of 2002/03 graduates – three and a half years on'.
2. A UK wide report was published in November 2007 by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The UK report and further information on the survey can be downloaded from the [HESA website](#).
3. There are two stages to the survey:
 - Early DLHE (six months after graduating)

The first stage is a census of EU domiciled graduates six months after they graduate from a UK HEI and is known as the Early DLHE. This survey replaced the First Destination record in 2002/03 and is carried out annually. A NI report on the 2002/03 Early DLHE can be downloaded from the [Department's website](#).
 - Longitudinal DLHE (three and a half years after graduating)

The second stage of the survey is a follow up to the Early DLHE and is carried out three and a half years after graduation. It is conducted on a sample of individuals who responded to the Early DLHE and is known as the Longitudinal DLHE. The first Longitudinal DLHE was carried out in the winter of 2006/07 on the 2002/03 graduates. The Longitudinal DLHE is due to be carried out biannually, with the next survey planned for the winter of 2008/09 on the 2004/05 graduates.
4. The 2002/03 Longitudinal DLHE survey was carried out by IFF Research Ltd on behalf of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and was co-funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Scottish Funding Council, Department for Employment and Learning (NI), Training and Development Agency for Schools and the Department of Health and Research Councils UK.

Methodology for Longitudinal DLHE

Sample Design

5. The 2002/03 Longitudinal DLHE survey was based on a disproportionate stratified random sample of 62,039 graduates, selected from the 307,652 graduates who responded to the 2002/03 Early DLHE. The sample was selected across virtually all UK HEIs with certain sub-groups oversampled, to provide adequate numbers for analysis. A response rate of 40% was obtained, leading to an achieved sample of 24,823.
6. Northern Ireland was one of the oversampled sub-groups, with 60% of NI domiciled students and 60% of non NI domiciled students who studied at a NI HEI included in the sample. The response rate of over 40% resulted in an achieved sample of 2,558 qualifiers from NI HEIs and 2,968 NI domiciled qualifiers. Both groups include the 2,371 NI domiciled qualifiers from NI HEIs.
7. The four main NI HEIs, namely Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College were all included in the survey.

Data Collection

8. The data were collected using a mixture of postal, telephone and online questionnaires. The majority of respondents were contacted by post.

Analysis

9. The Longitudinal DLHE data and hence results, are weighted to take account of the oversampling of subgroups and the effects of non-response bias. The application of weights is necessary to ensure that the final results are reasonably representative of the true population (i.e. EU domiciled graduates from UK HEIs in 2002/03 who responded to the Early DLHE). The tables attached in Annex 1 show both unweighted and weighted totals for each question, although all statistics are based on weighted data. The unweighted totals show the actual number of individuals who responded to each question. The weighted totals show the number of respondents after weights have been applied to represent the true population.
10. As with any survey the figures produced in this bulletin and in the tables attached in annex 1 are only estimates of the true population value. Even though the effects of non-response bias and oversampling have been taken into account, there is still a likelihood that the estimates will not exactly represent the true population.

11. The lack of certainty around the sample estimates are presented in the tables attached in Annex 1, by using 95% confidence intervals (labelled as 95% lower and 95% upper). That means that there is a 95% chance that the interval around each estimate contains the true population value. In other words, there is a 5% chance that the 95% confidence interval does not contain the true population value. The wider the confidence interval, the more uncertain the estimate.
12. Only differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level are reported in this bulletin.
13. The 2002/03 Early DLHE was a census of all EU domiciled students at UK HEIs which achieved a relatively high response rate (75%). The statistics generated from this census are therefore treated as being representative of the total population of EU domiciled students at UK HEIs (i.e. no weights or confidence intervals are applied). This is the agreed protocol used by HESA.

Report / Table Conventions

14. This report has been divided into two sections. Section 1 looks at graduates from NI HEIs and Section 2 covers NI domiciled graduates from UK HEIs including NI. The majority of students in both sections are the NI domiciled students from NI HEIs and therefore the results in each section are relatively similar. Section 1 also includes GB and EU students who studied at NI HEIs and Section 2 includes NI domiciled students who studied at GB HEIs.
15. A number of respondents did not answer all the questions necessary to assign them to an activity category used in the report. This accounted for 77 qualifiers from NI HEIs and 81 NI domiciled qualifiers. These respondents have been excluded from the analysis.
16. Unless otherwise stated, unknowns and responses of 'don't know' and 'refusal to answer' have been excluded from the analysis.
17. Totals in the 6 months tables in Annex 1 have been rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding figures may not sum to totals.
18. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Definitions

19. *Other undergraduate courses* - includes undergraduate diplomas and certificates, HNDs, HNCs and foundation degrees.
20. *Postgraduate courses* are those leading to higher degrees, diplomas and certificates (including postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) and professional qualifications) which usually require a first degree as an entry qualification.
21. *First degree courses* include first degrees with or without eligibility to register to practise with a health or social care or veterinary statutory regulatory body, first degrees with qualified teacher status, enhanced first degrees, first degrees obtained concurrently with a diploma and intercalated first degrees.
22. *Type of Job* – each occupation was classified as being a ‘Graduate’ or ‘Non-graduate’ occupation according to the classification scheme devised by Elias and Purcell in their [2004 report](#) - ‘SOC (HE) A Classification of occupations for studying the graduated labour market’ (Institute of Employment Research, Warwick).
23. *Domicile* – a student’s place of residence prior to enrolment on a Higher Education course.
24. *Mean and Median Salaries* - The mean measures the average salary earned by individuals within a group. However in a skewed distribution, such as earnings, the mean is influenced by a small number of very high earners. The median measures the salary earned by the middle person within a group, i.e. 50% of individuals earned salaries above the median and 50% earned salaries below the median.

Further enquiries

More details about any of the statistics in this statistical bulletin can be obtained from:

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DEL statistical news releases and bulletins can be accessed on the Department's web site - www.delni.gov.uk/index/statistics-and-research.htm

Media enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at the same address, telephone (028) 9025 7793.