



employment • further study • occupations • industries • qualifications • location of activity

# DESTINATIONS OF LEAVERS

from Higher Education Institutions  
Longitudinal Survey of the 2002/03 cohort

**Key Findings Report Published 2007**

Report prepared for HESA by the  
National Centre for Social Research

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# Summary

## Overview of activities 3.5 years after graduation

Three-quarters (74%) of graduates were in full-time paid work only (including self-employed) on 27 November 2006 while 6% were in part-time paid work only.

9% of graduates were combining work and further study while 5% were in further study only.

2% of graduates were assumed to be unemployed.

80% of full-time UK domiciled graduates and 82% of part-time UK domiciled graduates were working on 27 November 2006 (including those in full-time paid work only (including self-employed), part-time paid work only, self-employment, voluntary work and those combining work and study).

Graduates with postgraduate qualifications or a first degree were more likely to be working full-time than graduates with other undergraduate qualifications.

A quarter (25%) of graduates with a first degree who obtained a first class degree were in further study compared with 8% of those who obtained a third class degree.

First degree graduates in Medicine & Dentistry, Education and Agriculture were more likely to be in work than graduates in some other subjects. Graduates in Biological Sciences and Mathematical Sciences were among the most likely to be in further study.

Male graduates were more likely than female graduates to be in full-time paid work only (including self-employed) while female graduates were more likely than male graduates to be in part-time paid work only.

81% of graduates who were in full-time paid work only (including self-employed) at the time of the Early Survey were in full-time paid work only (including self-employed) at the time of the Longitudinal Survey. Three-fifths (60%) of those who had been in part-time work were in full-time work.

Two-thirds (66%) of those who had been studying at the time of the Early Survey were in full-time work at the time of the Longitudinal Survey.

## Employment

Most graduates in employment (80%) were working in occupations that were classified as 'graduate occupations'.

Graduates with postgraduate qualifications were more likely than those with a first degree or other undergraduate qualifications to be working in a graduate occupation.

The median salary of graduates in full-time work was £23,000.

Graduates with a postgraduate qualification in full-time work had a higher median salary than those with a first degree or other undergraduate qualifications (£28,000 compared with £22,000 and £20,000 respectively).

Most graduates in employment (80%) had a permanent or open-ended contract.

61% of graduates in employment were working in the same region as their region of domicile when they entered Higher Education.

Half (50%) of graduates in employment were working in the same region as their HE institution.

55% of graduates worked in the same region at the Longitudinal Survey as they had done in the Early Survey.

The most common reasons graduates gave for taking their current job were because it fitted with their career plans, to earn a living and to broaden their experience or develop skills.

## Study

A third (33%) of graduates with postgraduate qualifications in further study were undertaking a higher degree through research, as were 22% of those with a first degree in further study.

21% of graduates with postgraduate qualifications and 20% of those with a first degree in further study were undertaking a higher degree with a taught course.

40% of graduates with other undergraduate qualifications in further study were aiming to obtain a first degree.

The most common sources of funding for study were a grant or award, employer funding and self-funding.

55% of full-time graduates in further study were studying full-time compared with 18% of part-time graduates.

## Other qualifications achieved

Almost a third (32%) of graduates had achieved a further qualification since 2002/03.

14% of graduates with other undergraduate qualifications had obtained a first degree since 2002/03.

9% of graduates with a first degree in 2002/03 had since obtained a higher degree through a mainly taught course.

## Activity history

86% of graduates who completed the activity grid had had at least one period of full-time employment since 2002/03 while 21% had been employed part-time.

18% of graduates had been in full-time study or training while 4% had a period of part-time study as a main activity.

More than one in seven (16%) graduates had had at least one spell of unemployment.

Nine per cent of graduates had had at least one period of travelling or taking a gap year.

73% of graduates had had at least one job classified as a graduate occupation and 38% had had a job classified as a non-graduate occupation.

## Satisfaction

The majority of graduates did not think it was likely that they would, in retrospect, change their subject, institution, or qualification type or choose to do something else other than study.

37% of graduates were 'very satisfied' with their career to date and 48% were 'fairly satisfied'.

## Introduction

This report presents findings from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) Longitudinal Survey, conducted in winter 2006/07. This survey was carried out among the cohort of students who completed a Higher Education course at an institution in the UK in 2002/03. The aim of the survey was to collect information on the activities of graduates approximately three and a half years after leaving Higher Education.

## Background

The DLHE Survey is carried out by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the central source for the collection and dissemination of statistics about publicly funded higher education in the UK. There are two stages to the survey. The first stage is a census of individuals who have completed Higher Education courses in the UK. This stage is carried out six months after the courses end (or longer period for a minority of eligible leavers) and is referred to as the Early Survey. The second stage of the survey is conducted on a sample of around 60,000 leavers who responded at the first stage and takes the form of a follow-up around three and a half years after their course had ended. This stage is referred to as the Longitudinal Survey.

## Methodology

### Sample design

There were 412,580 students who graduated from full-time and part-time programmes from UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI) between 1 August 2002 and 31 July 2003 who were also domiciled (prior to joining their HEI) in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or other EU countries, and were not known to have died. This was the eligibility criteria for the Early Survey (students domiciled outside the EU were not surveyed). The Early Survey was a census and, as such, was issued to all 412,580 graduates. It achieved responses from 307,650 graduates (a response rate of 75%).

The sample for the Longitudinal Survey was selected from the 307,650 graduates who responded to the Early Survey. All HEIs were asked to participate. 62,040 graduates were selected by HESA. Selected graduates would become ineligible if they had died. There were certain sub-groups of graduates who were of specific interest. These groups were over-sampled to provide adequate numbers for analysis.

The HEIs provided contact details – at least one of email or mail addresses, or telephone number – for 55,900 of the sampled graduates.

### Data collection

The data have been collected using a mixture of postal, telephone and online questionnaires. The majority of respondents were contacted by post. The approach used depended on the contact details provided by the institution. The different modes were used sequentially:

1. All graduates with an email address were invited by email to fill in an online questionnaire. A week after the initial email a reminder was sent out.
2. Seven weeks after the initial email, graduates not responding plus all other graduates for whom they had a postal address were sent a postal questionnaire. A reminder and second questionnaire were sent out a month after the initial mailing.
3. Contact attempts were then made by telephone for graduates who had not responded online or by post and for whom a telephone number had been provided. Up to seven calls were made to each respondent.

Data collection was carried out by IFF Research.

A response was achieved from 24,825 of the 55,900 sampled graduates with usable contact details.

## Questionnaire coverage

The questionnaire covered the following topics

- main activity on 27 November 2006 (all graduates)
- details of current employment (graduates in employment)
- details of course and qualification aims (graduates in further study)
- other qualifications obtained since 2002/03 (all graduates)
- details of all activities since 2002/03 (sub-sample of graduates)
- satisfaction with course taken in 2002/03 and career to date (all graduates)

## Analysis

Analysis of the Longitudinal Survey data was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), using SPSS for Windows.

Two datasets in SPSS were provided to NatCen by IFF Research. The first dataset contained data for all survey respondents and was used for most analyses. The second dataset contained data for all activities for which respondents provided details in the activity history section of the questionnaire. This dataset was based on all activities (rather than respondents) and was used for some of the analysis of the activity histories.

The data were weighted by NatCen to correct for differential sampling and response rates.

A third dataset was created for analysis by subject, to deal with joint subjects. This dataset contained data for all subjects studied with subjects weighted to person-equivalents.

HESA provided NatCen with data from the Student Record (including demographic information and qualification details) and the Early Survey to use in analysis of the Longitudinal Survey data.

## Report structure

Chapter 1 of this report provides an overview of graduates' activities on 27 November 2006 and goes on to examine details of employment and further study that graduates were engaged in. Chapter 2 examines further qualifications that had been obtained by graduates since leaving Higher Education in 2002/03. The activity histories are discussed in Chapter 3 while Chapter 4 looks at graduates' satisfaction with their courses and their careers to date.

## Report conventions

Differences between subgroups that are reported are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Base numbers shown in charts have been rounded to the nearest multiply of 5.

Percentages in charts and tables are rounded to the nearest whole percent, therefore percentages may not sum to exactly 100%.

Bases declared in charts are unweighted. Base numbers reflect numbers of graduates who answered particular questions in the survey, hence these may differ between charts.

# 1. Activity 3.5 years after graduation

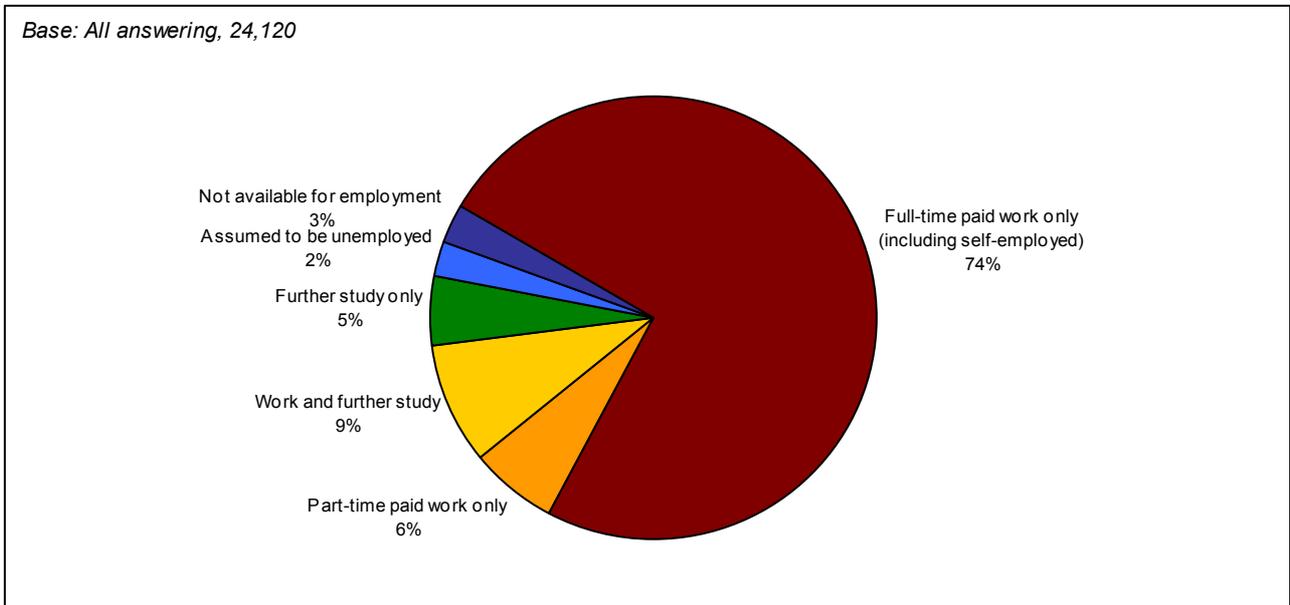
This chapter looks at the main activities of graduates three and a half years after their graduation, specifically their activities on 27 November 2006. The first section provides an overview of the graduates' activities, the second section focuses on graduates who were employed at the time of the survey and the final section concentrates on those pursuing further study.

## 1.1 Overview

This section begins by looking at the activities of all graduates at the Longitudinal Survey, then looking in more detail at UK domiciled graduates. The activities of UK domiciled graduates are examined by mode of study, qualification level, degree class and subject studied before describing the different destinations with respect to gender, age and ethnicity. The section concludes by comparing the main activity reported at the Longitudinal Survey with that reported at the Early Survey.

Figure 1.1 shows the proportion of all EU domiciled graduates in each activity category three and a half years after graduating. As the chart shows, most of the graduates were working full-time (74%) with 6% working part-time and 2% being assumed unemployed.

**Figure 1.1 Destinations of graduates**



[Table 1.1](#) provides a detailed breakdown of the responses by mode of study, qualification level, domicile and gender.

Of the 18,725 full-time graduates of UK or other EU domicile who completed and returned a copy of the DLHE survey, 74% were in full-time paid work only (including self-employed). In total, 89% of these graduates were in either full-time or part-time employment, or were doing voluntary or other unpaid work, including those working whilst studying. The proportion studying was 15%, 9% of these graduates were studying and working. The proportion who were assumed to be unemployed was 3%.

Of the 5,400 part-time graduates, 71% were in full-time paid work only (including self-employed) and 10% were in part-time paid work only. In total, 91% of these graduates were working and 2% were assumed to be unemployed. A smaller proportion of part-time graduates were studying compared to full-timers; 12% of part-timers were studying, the majority (10%) of whom were combining this activity with work.

Graduates domiciled in the EU both outside of the UK and in the UK were most likely to be working full-time, 75% of those domiciled in the EU outside of the UK and 74% of UK domiciled graduates were doing so. A higher proportion of full-time graduates domiciled elsewhere in the EU were in study only compared with UK domiciled graduates (11% compared with 6%).

## 1.2 Main activities of UK domiciled graduates

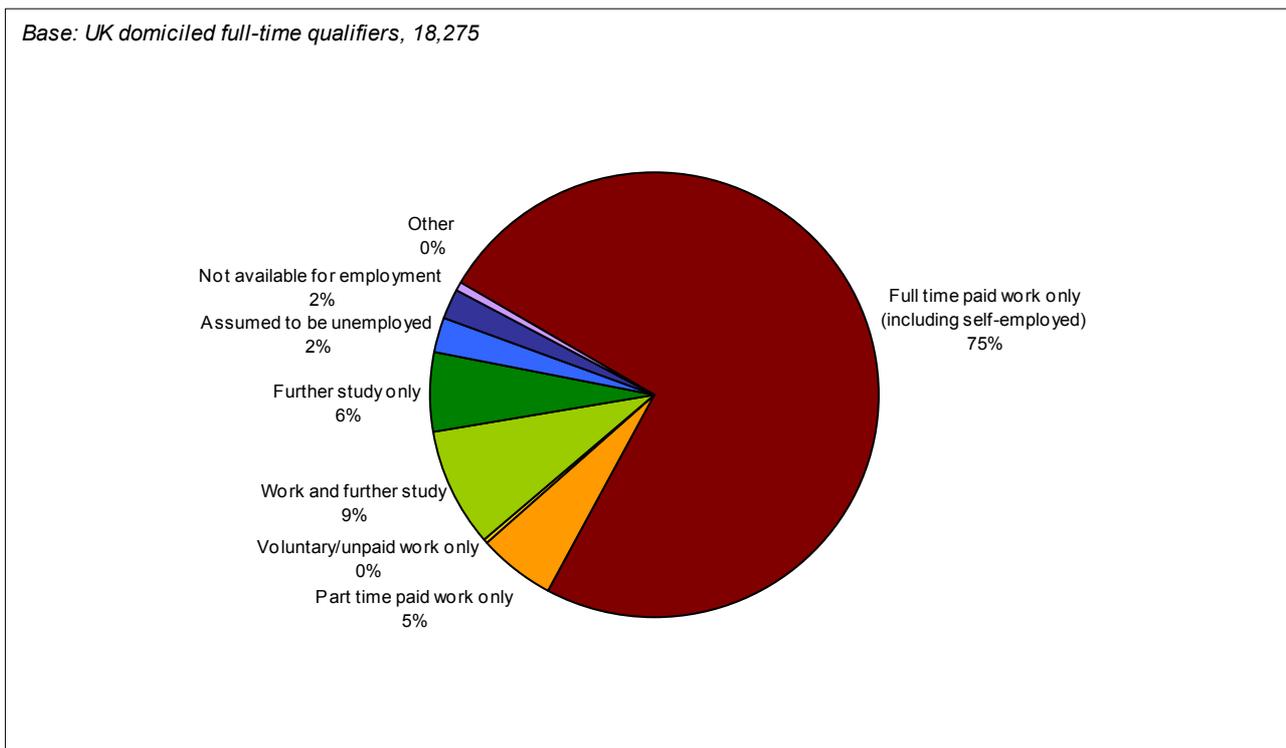
Almost three-quarters (74%) of UK domiciled graduates were in full-time paid work only (including self-employed) at the Longitudinal Survey and 7% were working part-time (Table 1.2). Almost one in ten (9%) graduates were working and studying while 5% were studying only. A small proportion (2%) were assumed to be unemployed.

Analysis of the UK domiciled graduates' destinations by information about their qualification and demographic characteristics shows some substantial differences between different groups of graduates. The main differences concern mode of study, degree class, subject, gender, age and ethnicity.

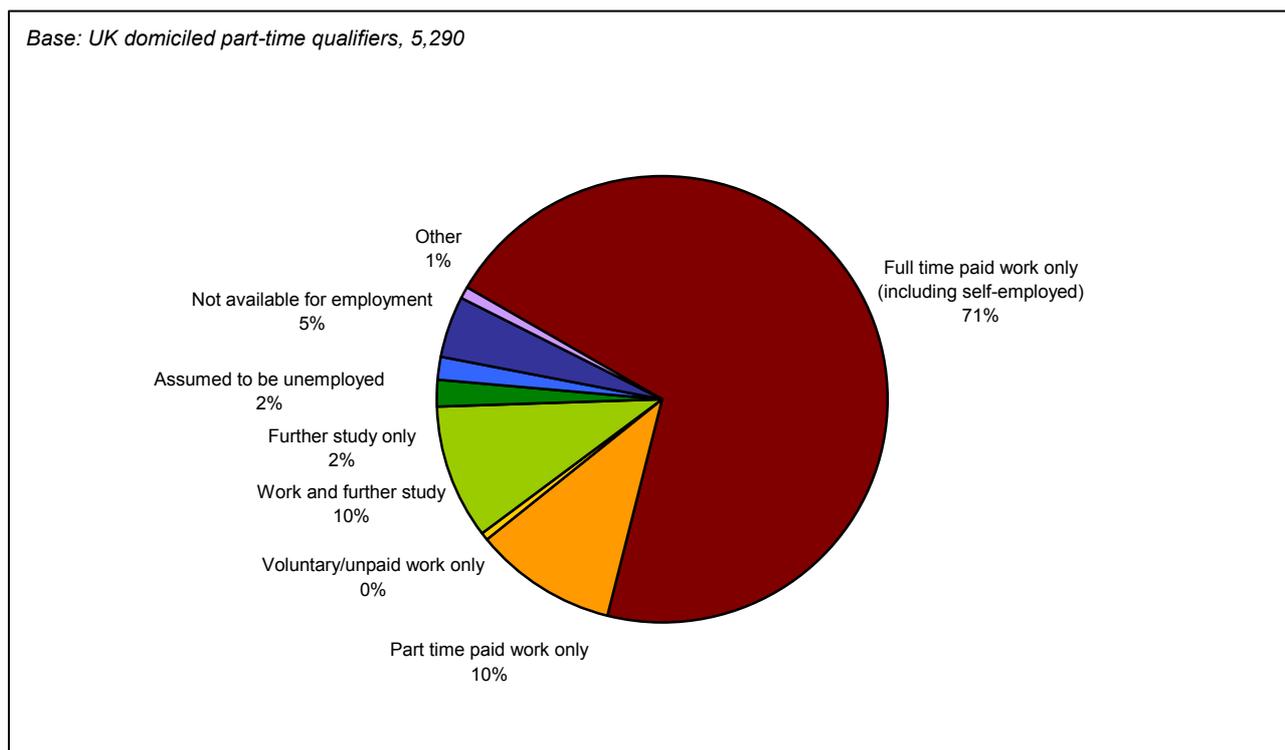
### 1.2.1 Mode of study

Overall, UK domiciled graduates from full-time courses were slightly more likely to work full-time (75%) compared to graduates from part-time courses (71%) while part-timers were more likely to work part-time (10%) than full-timers (5%) (Table 1.2). There was little difference in the total proportion working (full-time, part-time and voluntary/unpaid work) between full-time and part-time graduates; 80% of full-timers and 81% of part-timers. Meanwhile, 2% of both full-time and part-time graduates were assumed to be unemployed respectively. A higher proportion of the full-timers (6%) were studying only, compared to part-timers (2%) with 9% and 10% studying and working respectively. Part-timers were more likely to be unavailable for employment (5%) than full-timers (2%).

Figure 1.2 UK domiciled full-time graduates' main activity



**Figure 1.3 UK domiciled part-time graduates' main activity**



### 1.2.2 Qualification level

Most (93%) graduates with postgraduate qualifications were working (including studying with work), 10% were studying and 1% were assumed to be unemployed. The majority of postgraduate qualifiers were working full-time only (76%) while 8% worked part-time and 8% were combining work with study.

In total, 88% of graduates with a first degree were working, with 15% studying and 3% assumed unemployed. Of these graduates, 74% were working full-time only and 5% were working part-time. In addition, 9% were working and pursuing further study whilst 6% were only studying.

Nine in ten (90%) graduates with other undergraduate qualifications were working, 15% were studying and 3% were assumed unemployed. Almost two-thirds (65%) were working full-time and 12% were working part-time. Of this group, 12% were working and studying and 3% were studying only.

Graduates with other undergraduate qualifications were less likely to be in full-time work (65%) than those with postgraduate qualifications (76%) or a first degree (74%). Postgraduate qualifiers were slightly less likely to be assumed unemployed than first degree and other undergraduate qualifiers with 1% in this activity compared to 3% of both those with a first degree and other undergraduate qualifications.

### 1.2.3 Degree class

Among full-time first degree qualifiers with a classified degree class there was a relationship between degree class and the likelihood of pursuing further study (study only or study and work) (Table 1.4). Those who were awarded a first class honours were more likely than those with lower degree classes to pursue further study. (25% of those with a first class degree were in further study compared with 16% of those with an upper second) while those with third class honours/pass were less likely to be in further study (8%).

Graduates with first class honours were more likely to pursue further study on its own (16%) than combined with work (9%). In contrast, those with second class honours were more likely to combine work and study rather than solely studying, 7% of graduates with upper second class honours were only studying while 10% were studying and working.

Among full-time graduates, those with first class honours were less likely than those with a lower degree class to be working (80% compared with 88% of those with an upper second). This difference was not seen among part-time graduates with 90% of part-time graduates with first class honours in work compared with 87% of those with an upper second. There were also differences between full-time and part-time graduates within degree classes.

## 1.2.4 Subject

The activities of graduates from full-time courses also varied by subject ([Table 1.6](#)).

Among full-time graduates with postgraduate qualifications, pursuing further study was more common among those who studied Engineering and Technology (21%) or Social Studies (19%). Just 6% of those with postgraduate qualifications in Education, Business and Administration or subjects allied to Medicine were pursuing further study.

Table A below summarises the subjects of full-time first degree graduates with higher and lower proportions in each activity. Work was more common among graduates in Medicine & dentistry (96%), Education (95%), Agriculture & related subjects (95%), Business & administration (94%) and Law (94%). Those who studied Biological sciences (78%), Physical sciences (80%) and Combined subjects (80%) were less commonly in work. Graduates who studied Creative arts & design (6%) and Combined subjects (5%) were more commonly assumed to be unemployed.

**Table A: Proportion of full-time first degree graduates in work, study or assumed unemployed**

	Work (incl. work & study)		Study (incl. work & study)		Assumed unemployed	
<b>Higher proportions</b>	Medicine & dentistry	96%	Biological sciences	28%	Creative arts & design	6%
	Education	95%	Mathematical sciences	25%	Combined subjects	5%
	Agriculture & related subjects	95%	Combined	24%	Physical sciences	4%
<b>Lower proportions</b>	Combined subjects	80%	Education	6%	Engineering & technology	1%
	Physical sciences	80%	Mass communications & documentation	7%	Architecture, building & planning	0%
	Biological sciences	78%	Agriculture & related subjects	6%	Agriculture & related subjects	0%

[Table 1.7](#) shows the data for part-time graduates. However, due to small base sizes for part-time graduates in the different subjects it is not possible to compare the different patterns of activity for these groups by subject in detail.

## 1.2.5 Gender

At every qualification level, a higher proportion of men were in full-time work than women. In total, 79% of men were working full-time compared to 70% of women while 3% and 9% of men and women were working part-time respectively. This gender difference was the greatest amongst part-time graduates where 54% of female graduates with other undergraduate qualifications worked full-time compared to 81% of corresponding males ([Table 1.2](#)).

Women were more likely to be working part-time than men at every level, regardless of their mode of study and qualification. For example among the other undergraduate qualifiers, 20% of female part-time qualifiers were working part-time compared to 2% of men. The difference between the proportion of men and women working part-time was the smallest amongst full-time first degree qualifiers where 5% and 3% of women and men worked part-time, respectively.

Amongst all full-time graduates and part-time first degree graduates men were more likely to be assumed unemployed ([Table 1.2](#)). This gender difference was greatest amongst full-time graduates with other undergraduate qualifications where 7% of males and 2% of females were assumed unemployed. This was lowest amongst full-time first degree graduates where 3% of men and 2% of women were assumed to be unemployed.

Overall, men and women were both more likely to be studying and working than solely studying. However, women were slightly more likely than men to combine work and study (10% of women compared with 7% of men) ([Table 1.2](#)).

## 1.2.6 Age

[Table 1.2](#) shows a detailed breakdown of destination by level of qualification, gender and age.

UK domiciled graduates who were aged under 25 years in 2003 were more likely to be studying than those aged 25 or over (15% compared with 12%). The older age group were slightly more likely to be in work (91%) compared to the under 25 group (89%). More detailed analysis of the activities shows that the 25 and over age group were more likely to be working part-time (12%) compared to the under 25s (4%) whilst the younger group were more likely to be working full-time (77% compared to 68% of older group). In addition, the younger respondents were more likely to be pursuing further study on its own, 6% of under 25s compared to 2% of 25 and overs.

Women aged 25 or over were less likely to work full-time than younger women and were more likely than younger women to be working part-time. In total, 75% of women under 25 worked full-time compared to 61% of women aged 25 or over while 4% and 17% of the younger and older age group respectively were working part-time. This difference between older and younger women was seen at each qualification level. There was not an equivalent pattern among male graduates.

Amongst postgraduate qualifiers who studied part-time, women in the older age group were more likely to be combining any further study with work than only studying. Of these qualifiers, 12% of women were studying and working compared to 2% solely studying while there was no (significant) difference for younger women of whom 8% were working with studying and 6% were only studying.

Male part-time postgraduate and first degree qualifiers in the older age group were more likely than younger qualifiers in these groups to be unavailable for employment.

## 1.2.7 Ethnicity

[Table 1.3](#) provides a breakdown of activity by qualification level and ethnicity. For all ethnic groups, full-time work was the most likely activity, followed by part-time work or a form of study. The main differences in activities were seen between graduates of Black origin and those of White or Asian origin. Asian and White graduates were more likely than Black graduates to be in full-time work (75% of Asian graduates and 74% of White graduates compared with 67% of Black graduates). Black graduates were slightly more likely to be studying (16%) than White (14%) or Asian (13%) graduates. Black graduates were also more likely to be assumed unemployed (5%) than White (2%) or Asian (4%) graduates. White graduates were less likely to be assumed unemployed than all other ethnic groups.

## 1.2.8 Main activity at 3.5 years compared to main activity at 6 months

Most graduates (81%) who were in full-time work at the Early Survey were in this activity at the Longitudinal Survey. The majority of part-time workers from the Early Survey had moved to full-time work (59%) and 22% remained in part-time work. Of those studying and working at the Early Survey, 92% were working and 20% were still studying. The majority of those studying only at the first survey were working full-time at the second survey (66%). 8% of these graduates were now combining study with work and 15% remained in further study only. Overall, graduates in paid work at the first survey were more likely to combine work and study at the second survey than to study without working (Figure 1.4, [Table 1.5](#)).

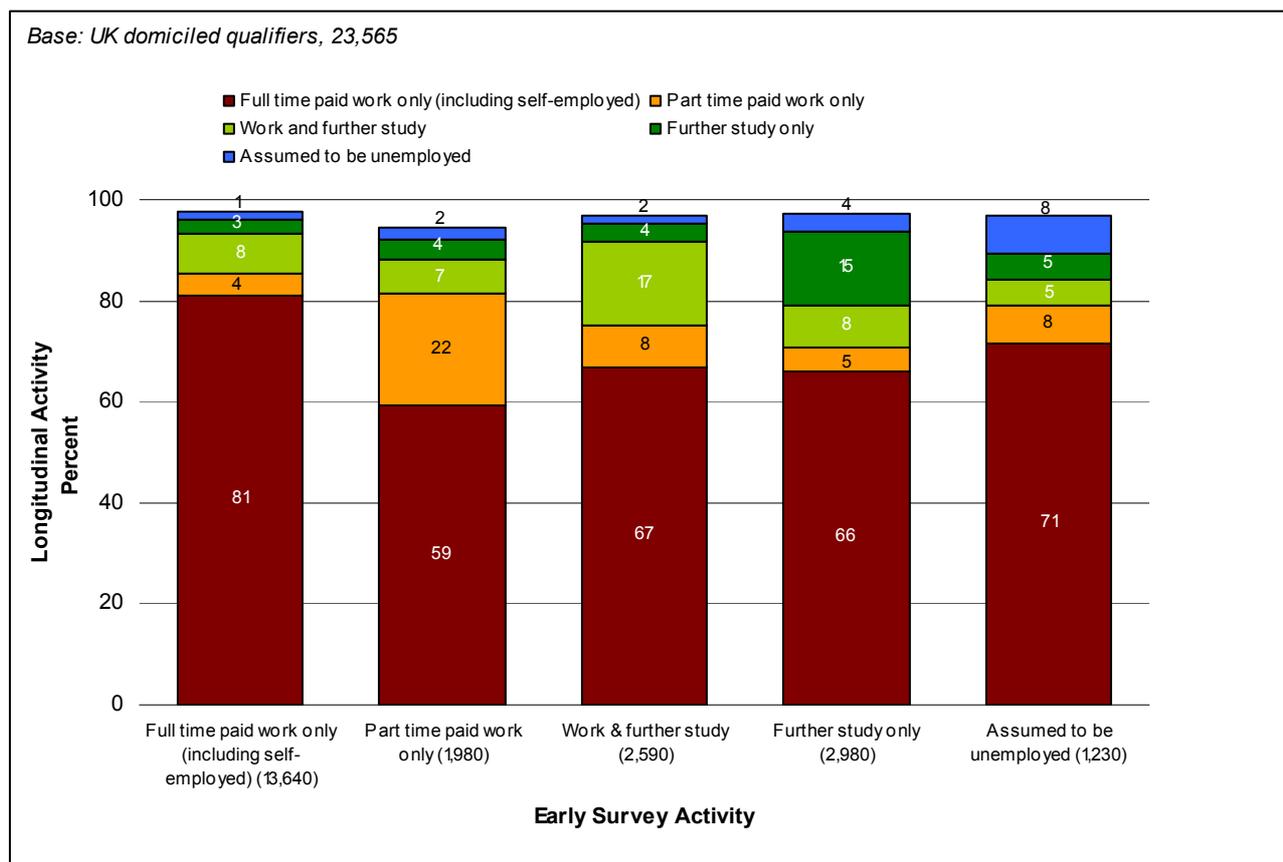
Most postgraduate qualifiers in full-time work at the Early Survey remained in full-time work (84%). For full-time postgraduate qualifiers the majority of those doing work and further study at the Early Survey were in full-time work at the Longitudinal Survey (71%). Of those doing further study on its own, 46% had moved to full-time work at the Longitudinal Survey with some continuing to solely study (18%) and 27% now combining study with work. Of those assumed unemployed in the Early Survey, 56% and 21% were working full- and part-time respectively, at the Longitudinal Survey with 6% remaining in the same activity category.

Most first degree qualifiers who were in full-time work at the Early Survey were also in this activity at the Longitudinal Survey (81%). The majority of those studying (67%) and studying and working (68%) were in full-time work at the Longitudinal Survey while 17% of those studying and 17% of those studying and working remained in the same activity. Amongst full-time first degree qualifiers, 81% of those originally in full-time work were also in full time work at the Longitudinal Survey, 70% of those working part-time at the Early Survey worked full-time at the Longitudinal Survey and 11% remained in part-time work. Three quarters of full-time first degree qualifiers who were unemployed at the Early Survey were employed full-time at the Longitudinal Survey while 7% were again assumed unemployed.

Amongst other undergraduate qualifiers, 70% of those in full-time work at the Early Survey were also in full-time work at the Longitudinal Survey - this was less than for postgraduate and first degree qualifiers. From this group, 18% of those assumed unemployed at the Early Survey were again assumed to be unemployed. The majority of full-time other undergraduate qualifiers who worked full-time at the Early Survey were again in full-time work (69%) and of those who were working part-time at the Early Survey 52% were working full-time and 27% part-time at the Longitudinal Survey.

In contrast to full-time graduates, the majority of part-time graduates who were in part-time work at the Early Survey were also in this type of employment at the Longitudinal Survey. This was most likely to be the case amongst postgraduate qualifiers where 57% of those in part-time employment at the Early Survey were also in part-time employment at the Longitudinal Survey.

**Figure 1.4 UK domiciled graduates' main activity at Early Survey by activity at Longitudinal Survey**



Only a small proportion of part-time postgraduate and first degree qualifiers who were not available for employment at the Early Survey were working at the Longitudinal Survey, 36% of postgraduates and 27% of first degree qualifiers. This is in contrast to full-time qualifiers, where 88% of postgraduate and 81% of first degree qualifiers who had been unavailable for employment were working at the Longitudinal Survey.

### 1.2.9 Overall comparison with activities of respondents in the Early Survey

The activities of graduates in the Longitudinal Survey followed broadly similar patterns to the activities of graduates in the Early Survey, although there were some differences. Full-time work was the most common activity at each survey although the proportion of graduates in 'full-time paid work only' increased from 57% at the Early Survey to 74% at the Longitudinal Survey. The proportion of graduates in 'further study only' fell from 14% at the Early Survey to 5% at the Longitudinal Survey. Similarly, the proportion assumed unemployed fell from 5% at the Early Survey to 2% at the Longitudinal Survey.

There were some similarities in the patterns of activity by subject among full-time graduates with a first degree at the Early and Longitudinal Surveys. Graduates in Medicine and Education were among the most likely to be in work at both surveys. Graduates in Maths were among the most likely to be studying (35% were studying at the Early Survey and 25% at the Longitudinal Survey). At both surveys, graduates in Creative Arts and Design were among the most likely to be assumed unemployed (10% at the Early Survey and 6% at the Longitudinal Survey).

However, graduates in Engineering and Technology, who had been among the most likely to be unemployed at the Early Survey (11%), were among the least likely at the Longitudinal Survey (1%).

The differences in activities by gender seen at the Longitudinal Survey, where male graduates were more likely than female graduates to be in full-time work only, were not seen at the Early Survey where female graduates had been slightly more likely than male graduates to be in full-time work. Women were more likely than men to be in part-time work at both surveys.

## 1.3 Employment

This section looks at UK domiciled graduates who were in employment three and a half years after graduation. First, the section looks at the industry that graduates are likely to be working in, followed by their type of occupation which is classified as being a 'graduate' or 'non-graduate' occupation. Then salary levels and contract duration will be examined before addressing region and country of employment. Finally, it examines the factors believed to be important for obtaining the current job, reasons for accepting the job and how they found their job.

### 1.3.1 Industry

[Table 1.9](#), [Table 1.10](#) and [Table 1.11](#) show the proportion of postgraduate, first degree and other undergraduate qualifiers, respectively, in each industry type by the subject studied.

The most popular industry for postgraduate qualifiers to be working in was the education sector (38%). As expected, a higher proportion of postgraduates who studied education were in this sector (76%) than other subjects ([Table 1.9](#)). Other subjects for which education was a popular sector include Languages (43%), Historical & philosophical studies (42%) and Creative arts & design (28%). The Health & social work industry accounted for 17% of postgraduate qualifiers in employment, with 70% and 63% of qualifiers who studied subjects allied to Medicine and Medicine & dentistry respectively working in this industry. In total, 16% of postgraduate qualifiers in employment worked in the Real estate, renting & business activities industry. 64% of those who studied Law and 50% of those who studied Architecture, building & planning were working in this sector.

The most common industries for first degree level qualifiers to be working in were real estate, renting & business activities (22%), health & social work (18%) and education (17%) ([Table 1.10](#)). The real estate, renting & business activities industry was the most likely destination for those with law and architecture, building & planning qualifications, (58% and 54% of these qualifiers respectively were working in this industry). The majority of first degree qualifiers with qualifications in medicine & dentistry (95%) and other subjects allied to medicine (74%) were working in the health & social work industry. Two-thirds (68%) of first degree graduates who studied education were working in the education sector, as were 27% of those who studied languages.

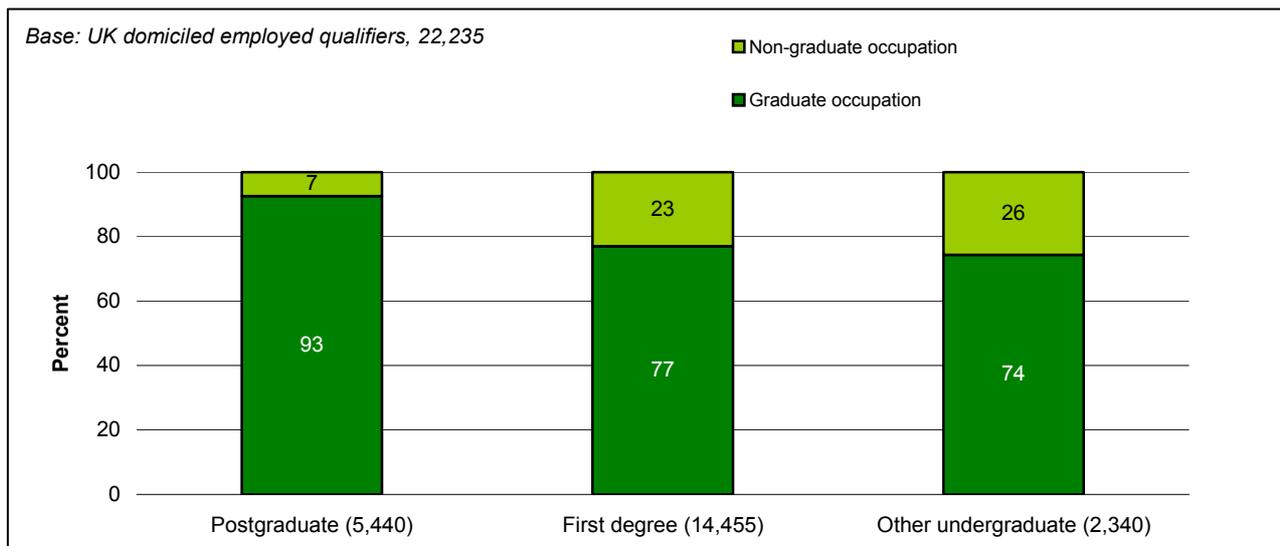
The most common industries for qualifiers with other undergraduate qualifications were health & social work (43%), real estate, renting & business activities (10%) and education (10%) ([Table 1.11](#)). The vast majority of those who studied subjects allied to medicine worked in health & social work with 93% of these qualifiers working in this industry. Two-thirds (67%) of those with other undergraduate qualifications who studied education were working in the education sector.

### 1.3.2 Type of occupation

Each occupation was classified as being a 'graduate' or 'non-graduate' occupation according to the classification scheme devised by Elias & Purcell (2004). Most graduates in employment (80%) were working in occupations classified as graduate occupations. As figure 1.5 and [Table 1.12](#), [Table 1.13](#) and [Table 1.14](#) show, there was some variation by level of qualification in the proportion of graduates working in occupations classified as graduate and non-graduate occupations.

Postgraduate qualifiers were more likely to be working in a graduate occupation than those with first degrees and other undergraduate qualifications ([Table 1.12](#), [Table 1.13](#), [Table 1.14](#)). In total, 93% of postgraduate qualifiers who were working (including those studying and working) were in graduate occupations compared to 77% of first degree qualifiers and 74% of qualifiers with other undergraduate qualifications.

**Figure 1.5 Type of occupation by qualification level**



At the postgraduate qualification level, the subjects from which graduates were more commonly in graduate occupations included architecture (97% in graduate occupations), subjects allied to medicine (96%) and medicine & dentistry (96%) (Table 1.12). Lower proportions of graduates from computer science (77%) and engineering and technology (80%) were in graduate occupations.

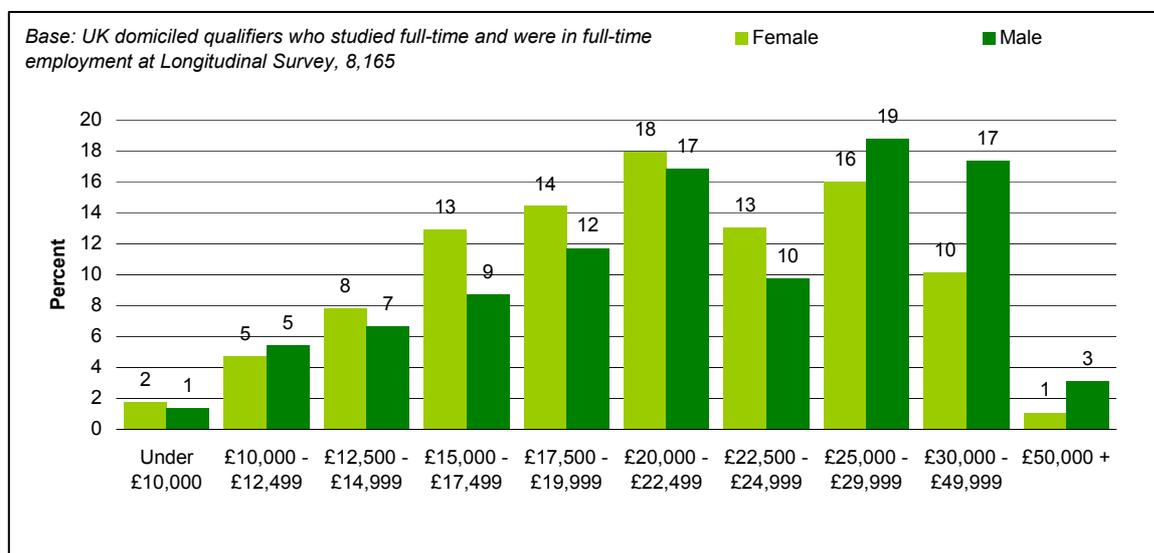
At first degree qualification level, graduates who studied medicine & dentistry (98%) and subjects allied to medicine (93%) were more commonly in graduate occupations (Table 1.13). Graduates with other undergraduate qualifications were most likely to be working in graduate occupations if they studied subjects allied to medicine (96% in graduate occupations) (Table 1.14).

### 1.3.3 Salary and contract duration

The median salary of UK domiciled graduates who were working full-time at the Longitudinal Survey was £23,000<sup>1</sup>. The salary distribution of first degree graduates who were in full-time work is illustrated for full-time and part-time graduates in Figures 1.6 and 1.7.

Graduates with postgraduate qualifications had the highest median salary (£28,000) followed by first degree (£22,000) and other undergraduate (£20,000) graduates.

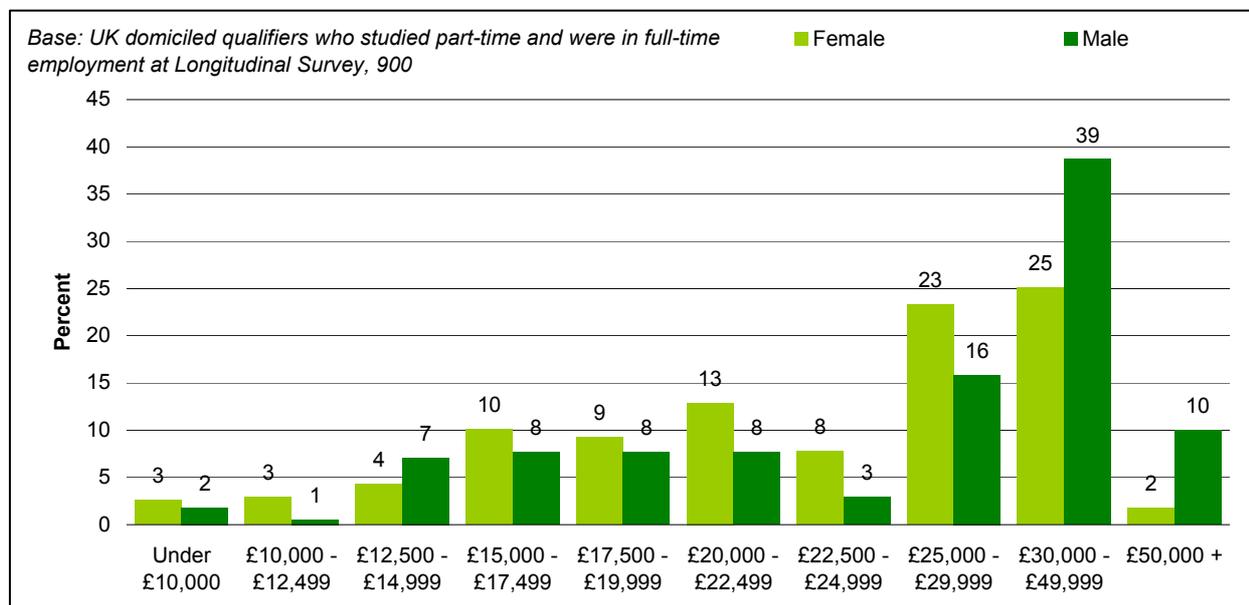
**Figure 1.6 UK domiciled full-time graduates who obtained first degree qualifications in full-time paid work by salary band and gender**



<sup>1</sup> Prior to any analysis of the graduates' salary levels the reported salaries were examined to identify any outliers. As a result employed graduates who reported salaries under £1,000 and over £600,000 were not included in the analyses of salary.

There was a £1,000 difference in the median salaries of full-time first degree male and female graduates although as figure 1.6 shows a higher proportion of men were in higher paid work. There was a larger gender difference amongst part-time graduates with first degrees where the male median salary was £3,133 higher than for females. There was also a larger difference between the distribution of male and female graduates with a much larger proportion of male graduates in the highest two salary bands (Figure 1.7).

**Figure 1.7 UK domiciled part-time graduates who obtained first degree qualifications in full-time paid work by salary band and gender**



As might be expected graduates were likely to have increased their salary between the Early and Longitudinal Surveys at all qualification levels (Table 1.15b). The postgraduate median salary increased from £22,000 at the Early Survey to £28,000 at the Longitudinal Survey while the first degree and other undergraduate median salaries increased from £16,000 to £22,000 and from £17,000 to £20,000 respectively. Despite a general increase between the surveys, 25% of postgraduate and 20% of other undergraduate qualifiers were earning less than £10,000 at both surveys (Table 1.15b). Examination of this by gender shows that men are less likely to have reported earning less than £10,000 at both surveys, (5% of men compared to 15% of women). Men were concentrated at the upper level of the pay bands with women tending to be clustered around the middle (Table 1.15c).

The majority of working graduates had permanent or open-ended contracts (80%) with those in graduate occupations being more likely to have this type of contract (Table 1.15d). In total, 81% of those in graduate occupations had this type of contract compared to 76% of those in non-graduate occupations. Qualifiers in non-graduate occupations were more likely to have temporary contracts, with 6% working through an agency compared to 1% of those in graduate occupations.

### 1.3.4 Region of employment

Looking at the geographical distribution of UK domiciled qualifiers' region of employment by their region of domicile, graduates were most likely to work in the same region as they were originally living. In total, 61% of graduates in employment were working in their home domicile region (Table 1.17).

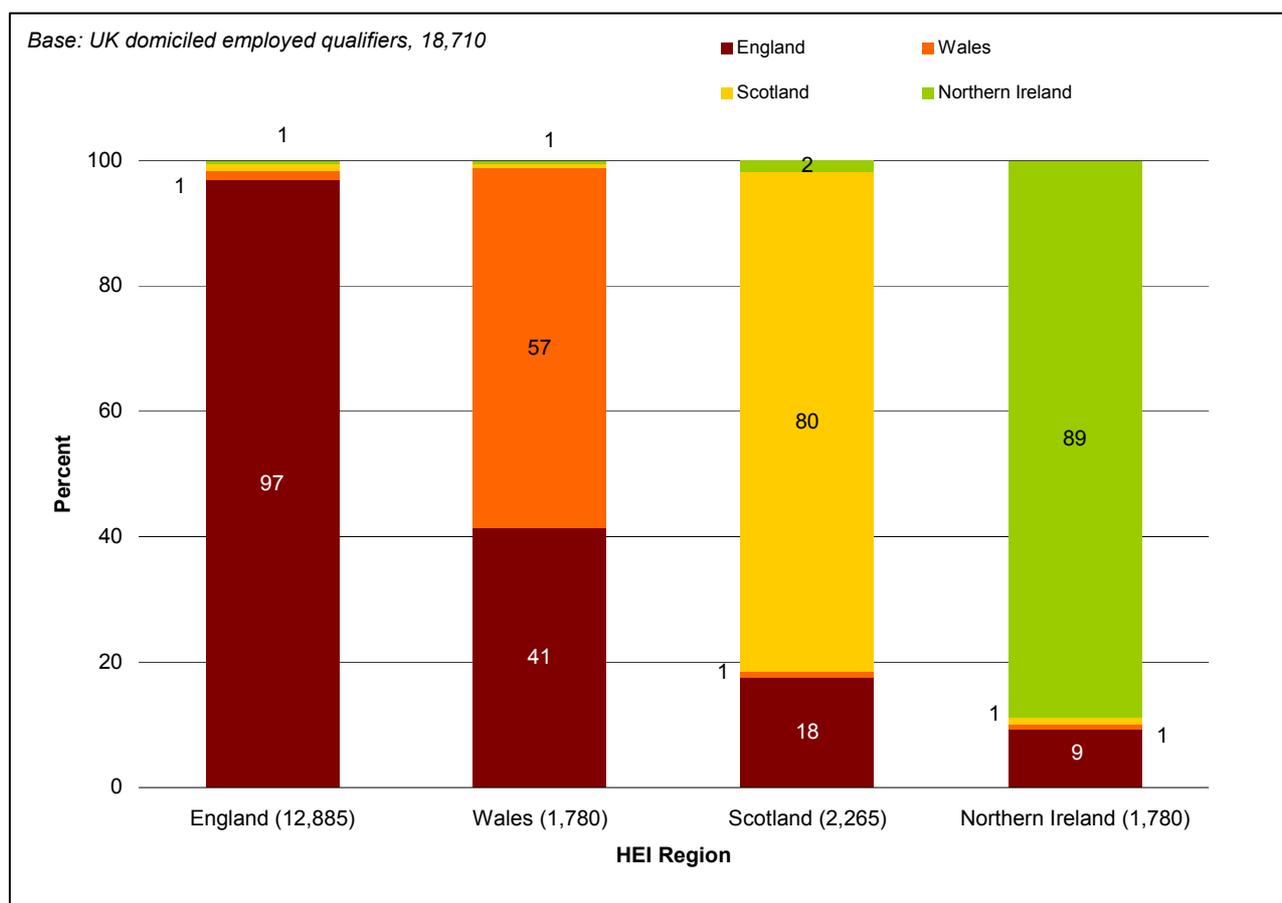
Most graduates from institutions in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were employed in the same country at the Longitudinal Survey (Table 1.18). Nearly all graduates from institutions in England were employed in the UK (97%) were working in England, while 89% of those from institutions in Northern Ireland were working in Northern Ireland. 80% of graduates from institutions in Scotland employed in the UK were employed in Scotland, while 18% were employed in England. Graduates from institutions in Wales were less likely to be employed in the same country, with 57% employed in Wales and 41% employed in England.

Most graduates from institutions in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were employed in the same country at the Longitudinal Survey (Figure 1.8). Nearly all graduates from institutions in England were employed in the UK (97%) were working in England, while 89% of those from Northern Ireland institutions were working in Northern Ireland. 80% of graduates from Scottish institutions employed in the UK were employed in Scotland, while 18% were employed in England. Graduates from institutions in Wales were less likely to be employed in the same country, with 57% employed in Wales and 41% employed in England.

Graduates with other undergraduate qualifications who attended institutions in Scotland were the most likely to be working in Scotland at the second survey (95%), followed by 83% and 76% of postgraduate and first degree qualifiers in employment respectively. Similarly, 97% of employed qualifiers with other undergraduate qualifications who attended institutions in Northern Ireland were employed in Northern Ireland compared to 87% of postgraduate and 88% of first degree qualifiers.

There was a different pattern for graduates who attended institutions in Wales. Just over half of employed first degree qualifiers from institutions in Wales (51%) worked in England (with the South West (15%) and London (9%) being the most popular destinations) while 48% remained in Wales. In contrast, 67% of postgraduate and 84% of other undergraduate qualifiers from institutions in Wales were working in Wales.

**Figure 1.8 HEI Region by region of employment at Longitudinal Survey**



At all levels of study, the majority of employed graduates reported that they were working in the same region at the Longitudinal Survey as they had been at the Early Survey (55%) (Table 1.19). Postgraduate qualifiers were the most likely to be working in the same region at both surveys (67%) followed by other undergraduate (56%) and first degree qualifiers (50%).

Of those graduates who were employed in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at the Early Survey, the majority were still employed in the same country at the Longitudinal Survey. Compared to postgraduate and other undergraduate qualifiers, those with first degrees were more likely to be employed in a different location at the second survey. Of the graduates with first degrees and employed in Wales at the Early Survey, 71% were still employed in Wales at the second survey with 28% now working in England. In contrast, 86% of postgraduates and 92% of other undergraduate qualifiers were employed in Wales at both surveys.

Nearly nine in ten (88%) graduates employed in Scotland at the Early Survey were employed in Scotland at the Longitudinal Survey, with 10% of those working in Scotland at the Early Survey being employed in England at the Longitudinal Survey. Nearly all postgraduate and other undergraduate qualifiers working in Scotland at the Early Survey were employed there at the Longitudinal Survey (98% and 99% respectively).

There was less variation in the proportion of graduates in the different qualification levels who were working in Northern Ireland at both surveys. Qualifiers with first degree qualifications were the least likely to remain in Northern Ireland (91%), followed by other undergraduate qualifiers (96%) and postgraduate qualifiers (95%).

### 1.3.5 Country of employment

Just 4% of graduates were working outside the UK ([Table 1.16a](#)). Those with postgraduate qualifications were more likely than those with a first degree or other undergraduate qualifications to be working outside the UK (7% of postgraduates in employment compared with 4% of those with a first degree and 2% with other undergraduate qualifications).

Two-thirds (66%) of graduates working outside the UK were employed in other EU countries while 34% worked in non-EU countries. Those with first degrees working outside the UK were more likely than those with postgraduate qualifications to be working in non-EU countries (39% compared with 28%) ([Table 1.16b](#)).

### 1.3.6 Importance of different factors in gaining a job

Graduates who were employed were asked to rate the importance of various factors in gaining their employment on a scale ranging from 'a formal requirement', 'important', 'not very important but helped' and 'not important'. The factors included the type of qualification they obtained, the subject studied, degree class and evidence of skills. Graduates' responses to this question are shown in [Table 1.20](#) broken down by qualification level and subject and [Table 1.21](#) by industry and occupation type.

Qualification type was more likely than other factors to have been a formal requirement with 42% of graduates reporting this to be the case, while 25% said it was important. Almost three in ten (29%) reported that the subject they studied was a formal requirement and a similar proportion (31%) said it was important. Just 12% of graduates said that the class or grade of their qualification was a formal requirement but a larger proportion (30%) thought it was important. A third (34%) of graduates said that evidence of skills or competencies was a formal requirement for their job and more than half (51%) said this had been important. Subsequent qualifications obtained had been a formal requirement for 17% of graduates and were thought to be important by 19%. More than a fifth (22%) of graduates reported that relevant work experience was a formal requirement for their current job and 46% reported that it was important.

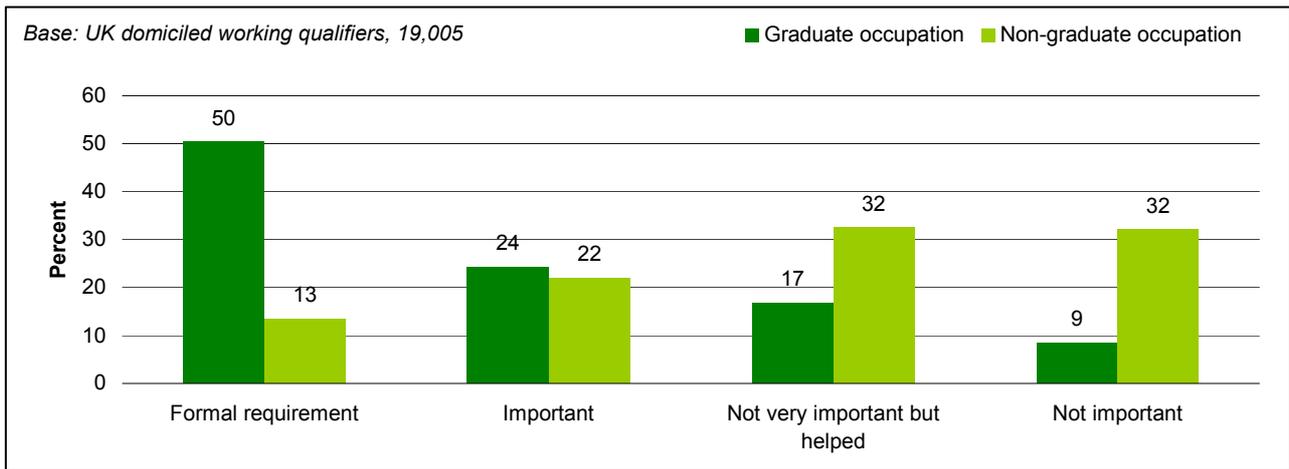
The proportion of graduates saying that the type of qualification they completed in 2002/03 was a formal requirement was similar across the three qualification levels. Postgraduate qualifiers were most likely to say this with 45% reporting that it was a formal requirement, while 40% of first degree qualifiers and 41% of other undergraduate qualifiers reported this.

Postgraduate qualifiers were more likely than those with a first degree to say that the subject they studied was a formal requirement or important to their job (70% compared with 54%). Other undergraduate qualifiers were the least likely to say that the subject was a formal requirement (39%).

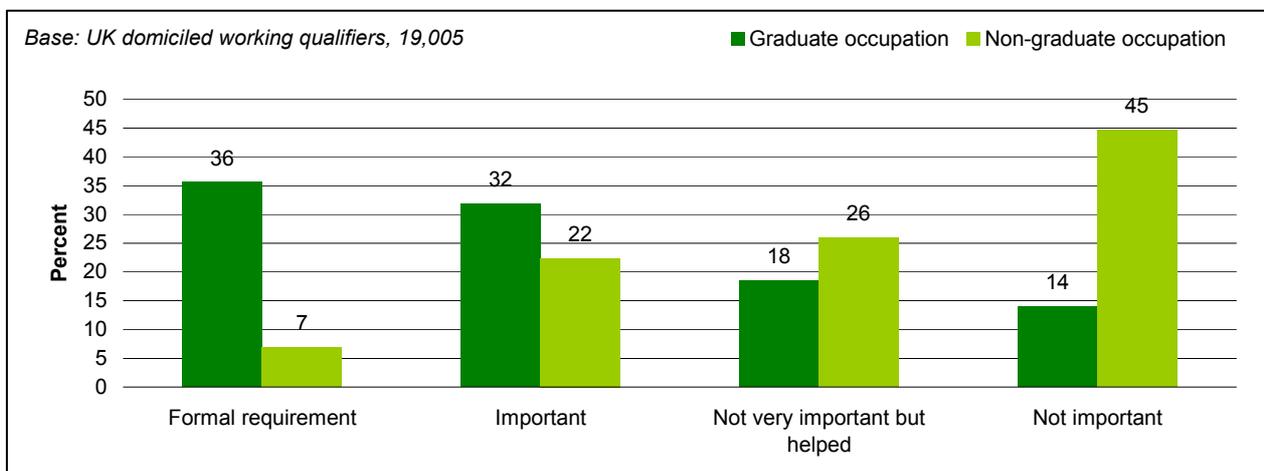
Among graduates with a first degree, those from medicine and dentistry courses (97%) were the most likely to report that the subject they studied was a formal requirement for their job. Those least likely to report that the subject they studied was a formal requirement or important to their job were graduates in Mass Communications and Documentation (29%) and Historical and Philosophical studies (29%).

Graduates in graduate occupations were more likely to say that their qualification type and subject studied were formal requirements than those in non-graduate occupations. As shown in figure 1.9, 50% of those in graduate occupations reported that their qualification type was a formal requirement compared to 13% of those in non-graduate occupations. Similarly, 36% of graduates in graduate occupations reported that their subject was a formal requirement compared to 7% of those in non-graduate occupations (Figure 1.10).

**Figure 1.9 Importance of qualification type to obtaining a job by occupation type**

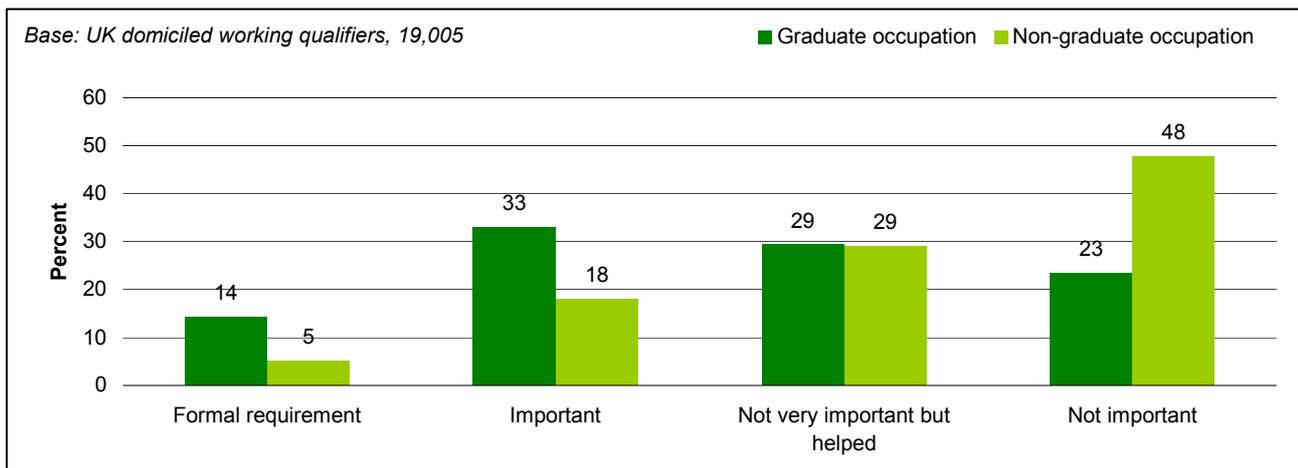


**Figure 1.10 Importance of subject studied to obtaining a job by occupation type**



Graduates rated the grade of their qualification as much less likely to have been a formal requirement of their job compared to the other characteristics of their qualification. Overall, as shown in figure 1.11, 14% of those in graduate occupations reported that the class of their qualification had been a formal requirement, whilst 33% said that it had been important. In contrast, just 5% of those in non-graduate occupations said that the class of their qualification was a formal requirement and 18% said that it was important.

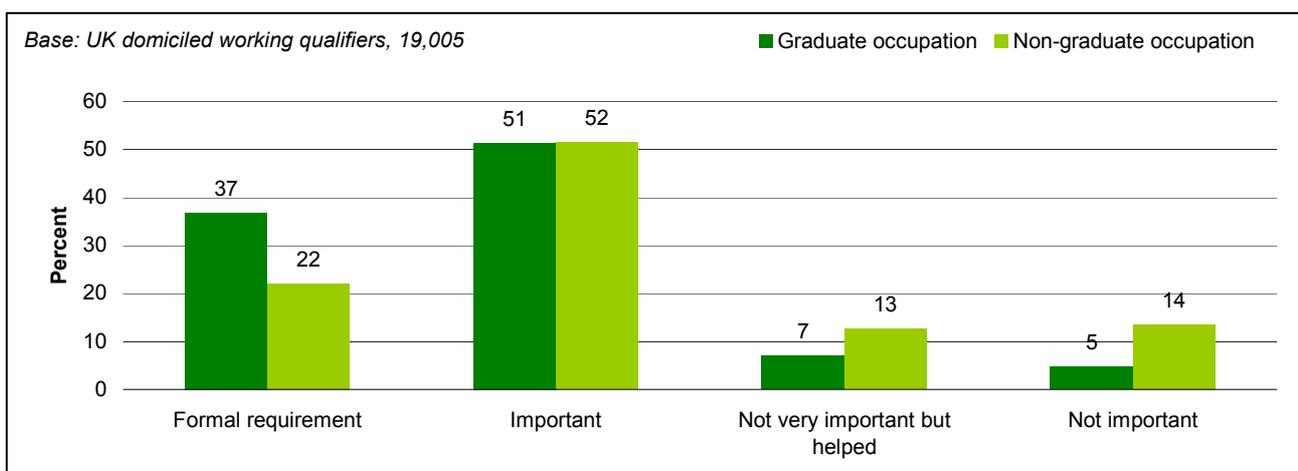
**Figure 1.11 Importance of grade achieved to obtaining a job by occupation type**



Other undergraduate qualifiers were the most likely to rate their grade of qualification as a requirement with 21% reporting this compared to 11% of both postgraduate and first degree qualifiers. However, the grade was still rated as important by 34% of postgraduates, 29% of first degree graduates and 27% of other undergraduate qualifiers.

Evidence of skills and competencies were rated as a formal requirement or important by the majority of graduates (Figure 1.12). In total, 88%, 85% and 83% of postgraduate, first degree and other undergraduate qualifiers reported that this was a formal requirement or important, with most from each level reporting the latter (Table 1.20).

**Figure 1.12 Importance of evidence of skills and competencies to obtaining a job by occupation type**



Graduates tended to say that subsequent qualifications were important in gaining employment, although a large proportion had not obtained any further qualifications since 2002/03. In total, 19% reported those that they did obtain as important and 17% reported them as a formal requirement. Graduates who studied Law were the most likely to say that further qualifications were a requirement with 29% of postgraduate and 45% of first degree Law qualifiers saying this. In total, 18% of first degree qualifiers said that the qualification was a formal requirement.

Relevant work experience from previous employment was rated as being important, or a formal requirement by the majority of respondents at each qualification level. Postgraduate qualifiers were the most likely to report this (76%), while 66% of first degree and 65% of other undergraduate qualifiers reported this. At first degree qualifier level, medicine and dentistry had the highest proportion reporting that this work experience was a formal requirement.

### 1.3.7 Reasons for taking the job

In addition to being asked what factors they thought were important in obtaining their employment, graduates were also asked about their reasons for accepting their job. Respondents were asked to indicate all the reasons that helped them decide to take the job from a list.

The most common reasons are shown in [Table 1.22](#) by qualification level and subject and in [Table 1.23](#) by industry and occupation type.

Two-thirds (66%) of graduates said they chose the job because it fitted into their career plans while 41% said that it was an opportunity to progress within the organisation. More than half (55%) reported that it was exactly the type of work they wanted.

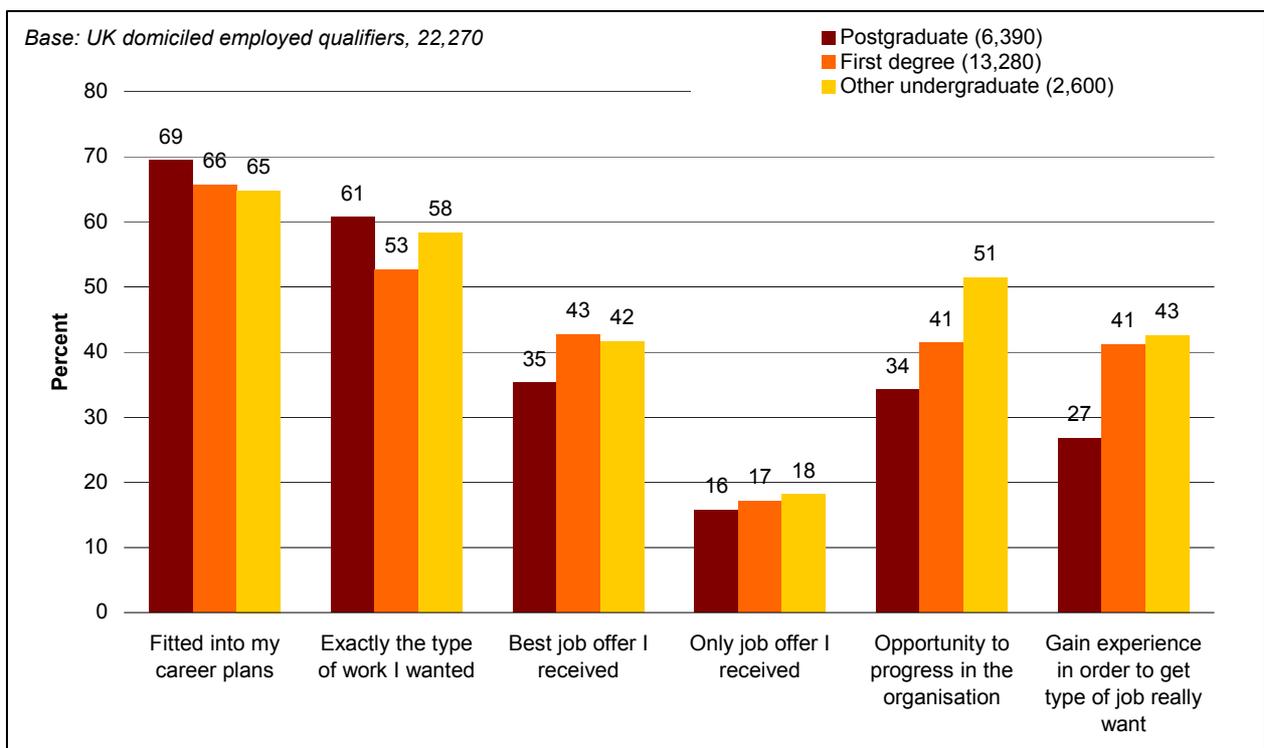
Just under two-fifths of graduates (38%) said they took their current job to gain experience to get a job they really wanted while 60% said they took the job to broaden their experience or develop their skills.

Two-fifths (41%) said the job was the best offer they had received while a smaller proportion (17%) said that they took their job as it was the only offer they had received.

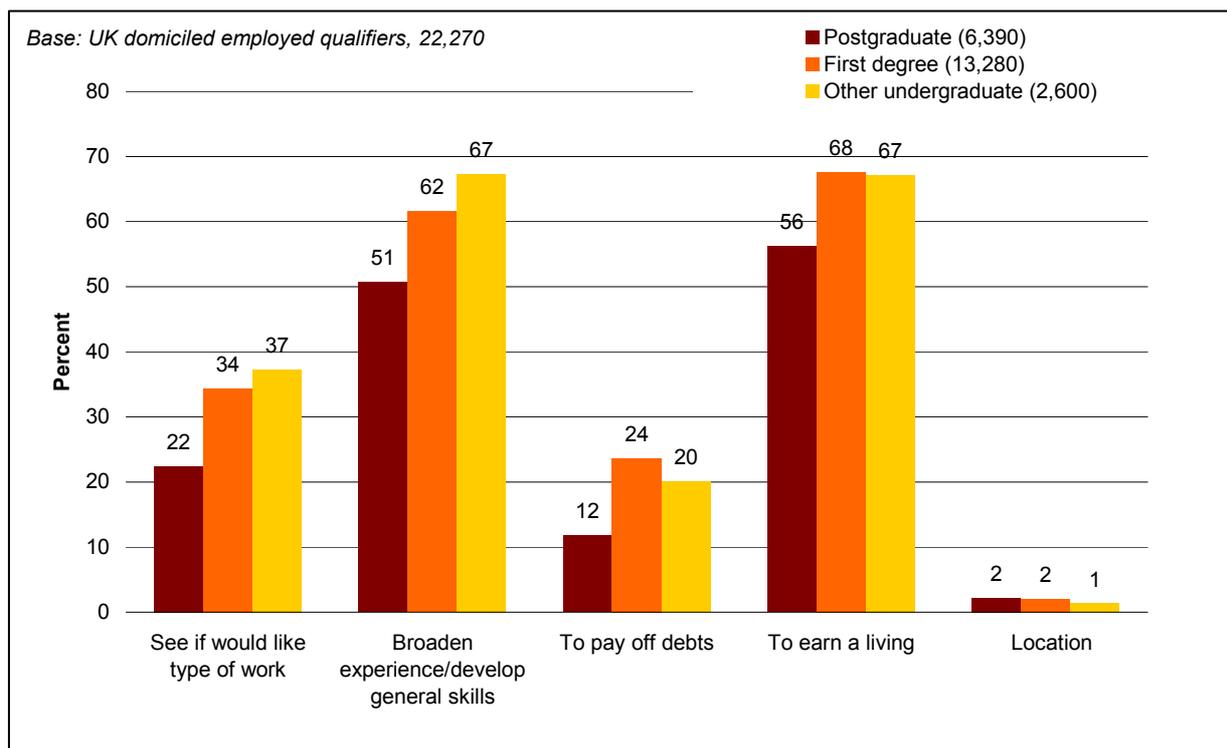
Almost two-thirds (65%) of graduates said they took the job to earn a living while a fifth (20%) said it was to pay off debts.

As illustrated in figures 1.13 and 1.14, there were some differences in the reasons why graduates from different qualification levels accepted their current job. First degree and other undergraduate qualifiers were more likely to say that it was to broaden their experience or develop skills and to see if they would like the type of work involved. Qualifiers with a first degree were the most likely to say that they took the job in order to earn a living (68%) or to pay off debts (24%)

**Figure 1.13 Reason took current job by qualification level**



**Figure 1.14 Reason took current job by qualification level**



Those in graduate occupations were more likely than graduates in non-graduate occupations to report that they took their job because it fitted into their career plans and it was the type of work they wanted to do. Graduates working in non-graduate occupations were more likely than those in graduate occupations to say that they took the job to gain experience, to see if they would like the type of work involved, to pay off debts, or to earn a living.

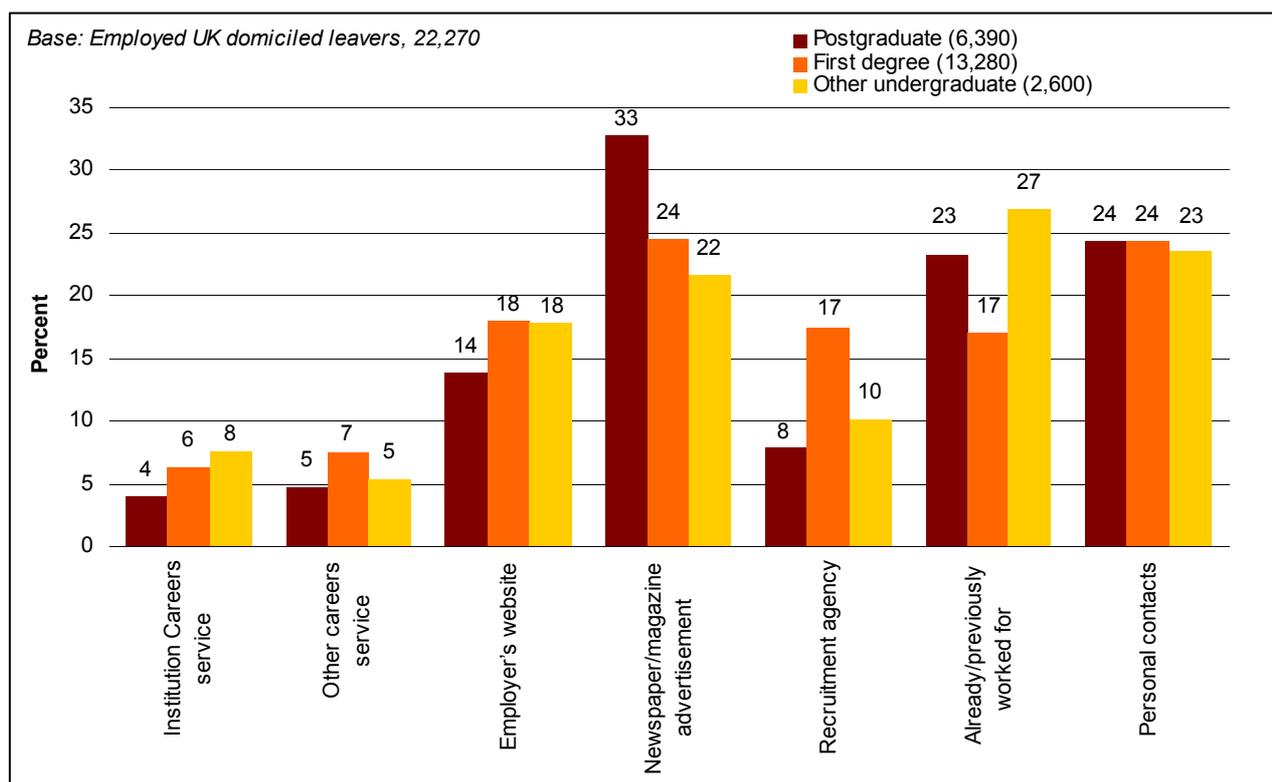
There were several gender differences in the reasons for graduates taking their job. Men were more likely to report taking their job in order to gain experience in the type of job they really want (41% compared to 35% of women) and also to earn a living (68% of men compared to 63% of women).

### 1.3.8 Source of finding job

As figure 1.15 shows, the most popular sources of finding a job were newspaper/magazine advertisements or websites, which 27% of employed graduates reported using to find out about their current job. Personal contacts were the second most common source with 24% of graduates having found out about their job through family or friends ([Table 1.25](#)).

Postgraduate qualifiers were less likely to have found out about their job from a careers service not associated with their institution, a recruitment agency or through speculative applications than qualifiers from first degree and other undergraduate courses. Qualifiers with other undergraduate qualifications were most likely to report that they already, or had previously, worked for their current organisation, (27% of qualifiers from this group reported using this source) ([Table 1.24](#)).

Figure 1.15 Source of finding job by qualification level



Overall, graduates working in graduate occupations were more likely to report previously having worked for the organisation or their HE institution's careers service as sources for finding out about the job than those in non-graduate occupations (Table 1.25). A higher proportion of graduates working in non-graduate occupations reported using recruitment agencies (21%) compared to those in graduate occupations (12%). Graduates working in the education sector were the most likely to have used newspaper/magazine advertisements to find their job with 40% and 32% of those in graduate and non-graduate occupations, respectively, reporting this. Those working in the financial intermediation industry were the least likely to use this source (14% of all). Graduates working in the other community, social and personal service activities industry were the most likely to report using personal contacts to find their job, in total 34% reported using this source.

## 1.4 Study

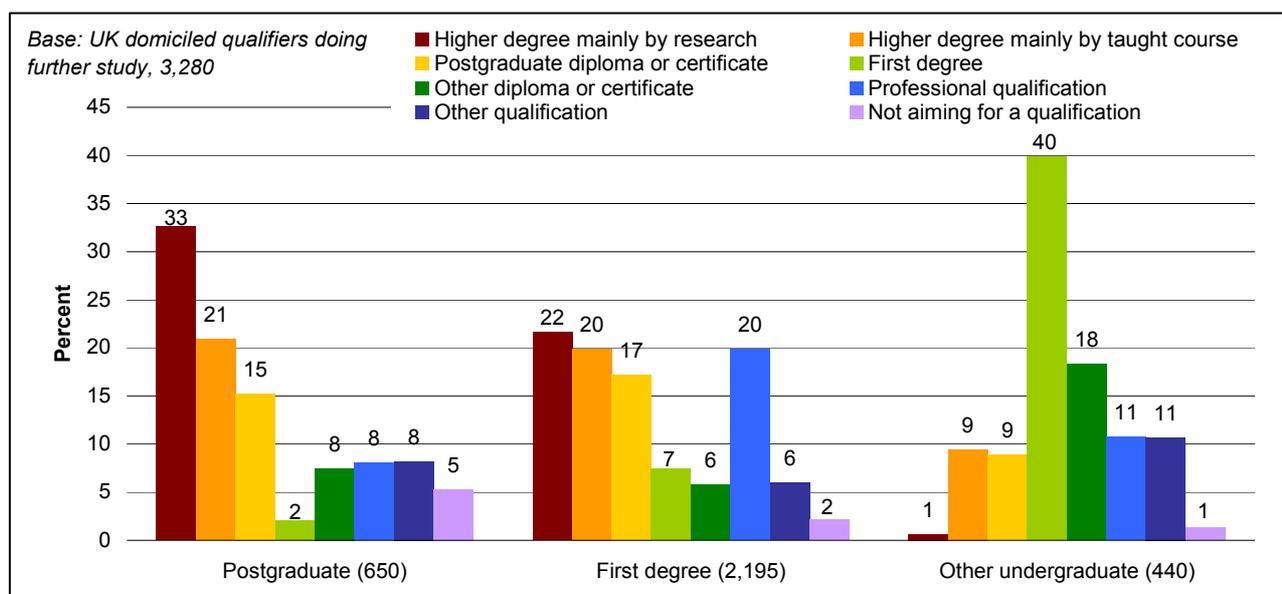
This section looks at graduates in further study at the Longitudinal Survey, including those who were studying and working. The section will start by examining the type of qualification graduates are aiming to achieve from their further study followed by the subject, funding source and then their mode and length of study.

### 1.4.1 Type of qualification

The type of qualification which graduates were aiming to achieve from their further study varied according to the original mode of study, level of qualification and gender (Table 1.26). As illustrated in figure 1.16, postgraduate qualifiers who were studying were most likely to be doing a higher degree mainly by research (33%) while 21% were doing a higher degree mainly by taught course and 15% were working towards a postgraduate diploma or certificate. Of first degree qualifiers in further study, 22% were doing higher degrees mainly by research with 20% doing a higher degree mainly by taught course. Those with other undergraduate qualifications were most likely to be studying for a first degree (40%).

Full-time qualifiers with postgraduate qualifications were most likely to be doing a higher degree mainly by research with 56% of men and 34% of women postgraduates in further study aiming for this qualification. One in ten (10%) men and 24% of women in this group were aiming to obtain a higher degree mainly by a taught course. Male full-time qualifiers with first degrees were also most likely to be doing a higher degree mainly by research (28%) while 19% of women with first degrees in further study were aiming for this qualification. Women first degree qualifiers were most likely to be doing a higher degree mainly by taught course (22%) while 16% of men were aiming for this qualification. Men and women full-time qualifiers with other undergraduate qualifications who were studying were most likely to be aiming for a first degree with 42% and 48% of men and women doing so respectively.

**Figure 1.16 Type of further study by qualifier qualification level**



## 1.4.2 Subject

Most graduates who were studying at the second survey were studying the same subject as they had studied in their completed qualification in 2002/03, although for some subjects this was less likely to be the case (Table 1.27). For example, amongst first degree qualifiers, 41% of mathematical science qualifiers were doing a qualification in business & administration at the second survey while 35% of qualifiers who previously studied education were now studying subjects allied to medicine.

## 1.4.3 Funding source

The three most common funding sources were employer support (33%), self funding (33%) and a grant/award (30%) (Table 1.28). Graduates from each qualification level who were aiming to complete professional qualifications were most likely to be having their qualification funded by their employer. In total, 65% studying a professional qualification were funded by their employer. Graduates studying higher degrees were most likely to have received a grant or award with 59% of postgraduate and 77% of first degree qualifiers studying this type of qualification reporting this as their main funding source. Graduates studying higher degrees mainly by taught course were more commonly funding their own course with 50% of both postgraduate and first degree qualifiers doing so. Of those studying higher degrees mainly by taught course, 9% of postgraduate and 19% of first degree qualifiers reported that their main funding source was an award or grant.

## 1.4.4 Mode and length of study

Of the full-time graduates who were studying at the second survey, 55% were studying full-time with the remaining 45% studying part-time, this is in contrast to part-time graduates of whom 82% were studying part-time (Table 1.30). The mode of further study also varied according to original level of qualification and gender. Full-time male graduates were more likely to be studying full-time than women.

The majority of graduates were completing courses which lasted between one and three years (51%), followed by courses of over three years (28%) (Table 1.29a). Male postgraduate qualifiers were most likely to be doing a course which lasted more than three years while the majority of males and females from other qualification levels were most likely to be following courses of between one and three years length.

### 1.4.5 Reason for undertaking further study

The reason given by most graduates for undertaking further study was to change or improve their career options ([Table 1.29b](#)). In total, 65% of postgraduate, 80% of first degree and 80% of other undergraduate qualifiers gave this reason. Of the graduates aged under 25, 81% gave this reason, compared to 69% of those aged 25 or over ([Table 1.29d](#)).

Graduates with first degrees and other undergraduate qualifications were more likely to report pursuing their further study than those in graduate occupations to improve their skills or knowledge than those with postgraduate qualifications. Men were more likely to say that they were studying because they could not find a suitable job with 19% reporting this compared to 10% of women. In addition, the proportion of graduates aged under 25 deciding to study because of a lack of suitable job was 16%, twice that of the 25 or over age group (8%).

## 2. Other qualifications achieved

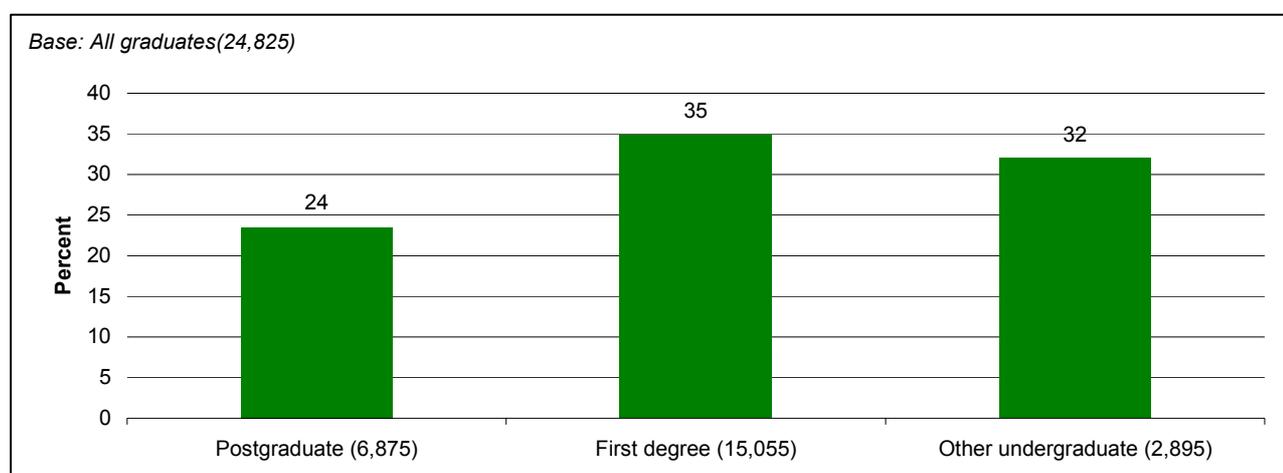
All graduates were asked to provide details of any qualifications they had achieved since leaving higher education in 2002/03.

Almost a third (32%) of graduates had achieved a further qualification since leaving higher education. The majority of graduates with further qualifications (73%) had achieved one qualification. Almost a fifth (19%) had achieved two qualifications, while 8% had achieved more than two.

Graduates with a first degree or other undergraduate qualifications were more likely than those with postgraduate qualifications to have achieved further qualifications since 2002/03 (35% of graduates with a first degree and 32% with other undergraduate qualifications compared with 24% of those with postgraduate qualifications) (Figure 2.1).

Younger graduates were more likely than older graduates to have obtained further qualifications, a difference that was seen across all qualification levels. Further qualifications had been obtained by 35% of graduates aged under 25 compared with 27% of those aged 25 or over.

**Figure 2.1** Percentage of graduates obtaining further qualifications by qualification level



### 2.1 Types of qualification achieved

One in ten graduates had obtained a postgraduate diploma or certificate since 2002/03 while 8% had obtained a professional qualification (Table 2.1). A higher degree with a mainly taught course had been obtained by 7% of graduates while just 1% had obtained a higher degree mainly by research. A first degree had been obtained by 2% of graduates and 6% had obtained another type of diploma or certificate.

As might be expected, most of the graduates who had obtained a first degree since 2002/03, had left their course in 2002/03 with 'other undergraduate' qualifications. In total, 14% of all graduates with 'other undergraduate qualifications' had obtained a first degree since 2002/03 (Table 2.1).

Graduates with a first degree were more likely than those with postgraduate or other undergraduate qualifications to have obtained a higher degree with a mainly taught course (9% of graduates with a first degree compared with 5% of those with postgraduate qualifications and 3% of those with other undergraduate qualifications).

There were some differences in the type of qualification obtained by mode of study. Graduates with a first degree who had studied full-time were more likely than those who had studied part-time to have obtained a higher degree with a taught course (10% of those who were full-time compared with 4% of those who were part-time). Among graduates with other undergraduate qualifications, those who were full-time were more likely than those who were part-time to have since obtained a first degree (15% compared with 10%). However, graduates with other undergraduate qualifications who were part-time were more likely than those who were full-time to have obtained other diplomas or certificates (13% compared with 6%).

There were also some differences by age group. Full-time graduates with a first degree who were aged under 25 were more likely than those aged 25 or over to have obtained a higher degree with a taught course (10% compared with 7%) ([Table 2.2a](#)). Among full-time graduates with postgraduate qualifications, those aged under 25 were more likely than those aged 25 or over to have obtained postgraduate diplomas or certificates (13% compared with 5%).

There were no significant differences in the types of qualification obtained for graduates in different activities 3.5 years after graduation. Graduates who were in further study (without also working) and those assumed to be unemployed were the most likely to have obtained a higher degree through a taught course (19% and 16% respectively) ([Table 2.3](#)).

## **2.2 Funding for other qualifications**

The most common sources of funding for other qualifications were employers providing financial support (mentioned by 39% of those who had obtained further qualifications) and self-funding (mentioned by 36%). A fifth (20%) of those who had obtained further qualifications had received a grant or an award. 6% had received some other form of funding for further qualifications.

The majority of graduates (58%) who had obtained a higher degree by research reported that they had received a grant or award. Less than a quarter (23%) of those who had obtained a higher degree through a taught course had received a grant or award and 62% had funded themselves. Among graduates who had obtained a first degree, 23% had received a grant or award, 27% had received financial support from their employer and nearly half (48%) had funded themselves. Three-fifths (60%) of graduates who had obtained a professional qualification had received financial support from an employer.

### 3. Activity history

A sub-sample of graduates completed an ‘activity history’ grid as part of the questionnaire, providing details on all of their activities since leaving higher education. In total, 14,805 graduates provided activity history information. Of these, 10,420 graduates provided details of all their activities prior to their current activity while 4,385 graduates stated that they had been in their current activity continuously since their course ended in 2002/03. This chapter presents findings from the activity histories, examining graduates’ experience of different kinds of activity and patterns of activity.

#### 3.1 Experience of different activities

Most graduates had had at least one spell of employment (including their current activity), with 86% having been employed full time (Figure 3.1). More than one in five (21%) had been in part-time employment while seven per cent had been self-employed or freelance.

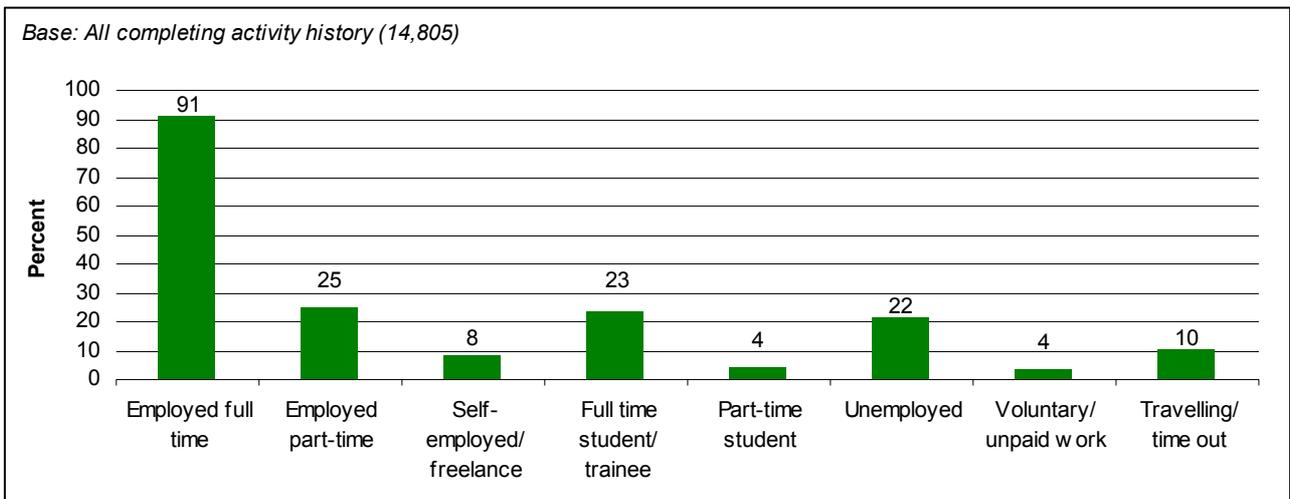
Graduates with a first degree or postgraduate qualifications were more likely than those with other undergraduate qualifications to have been in full-time employment (87% of those with a first degree and 85% of those with postgraduate qualifications compared with 80% of those with other undergraduate qualifications) (Table 3.2). Postgraduates were less likely to have worked part-time (18% compared with 22% of those with a first degree and 23% of those with other undergraduate qualifications). Female graduates were more likely than male graduates to have worked part-time (26% compared with 16%) (Table 3.1).

Nearly a fifth (18%) of graduates had been full-time students or trainees while four per cent had been part-time students. Graduates with a first degree were most likely to have had a period of full-time study (23%) followed by 15% of those with other undergraduate qualifications, while just eight per cent of those with postgraduate qualifications had had a period of full-time study. Nearly half (47%) of graduates with a first degree in Law had been a full-time student or trainee, a higher proportion than for any other subject group.

16% of graduates had had at least one spell of unemployment since leaving higher education. Unemployment was more commonly experienced by male graduates than female graduates (20% compared with 13%). Graduates with a first degree were more likely than those with postgraduate qualifications or other undergraduate qualifications to have experienced unemployment (19% of those with a first degree compared with 13% of those with other undergraduate qualifications and 10% of those with postgraduate qualifications). The proportion of graduates completing the activity grid who indicated that they had been unemployed was lower than the proportion of the whole sample who said that they had been unemployed for a period of one month or more since graduation (27%).

Nine per cent of graduates had had at least one period of travelling or taking a ‘gap year’, with those aged under 25 more likely than those aged 25 or over to have done this (12% compared with 3%). Just three per cent of graduates had had a spell of voluntary or unpaid work.

Figure 3.1 Experience of activities

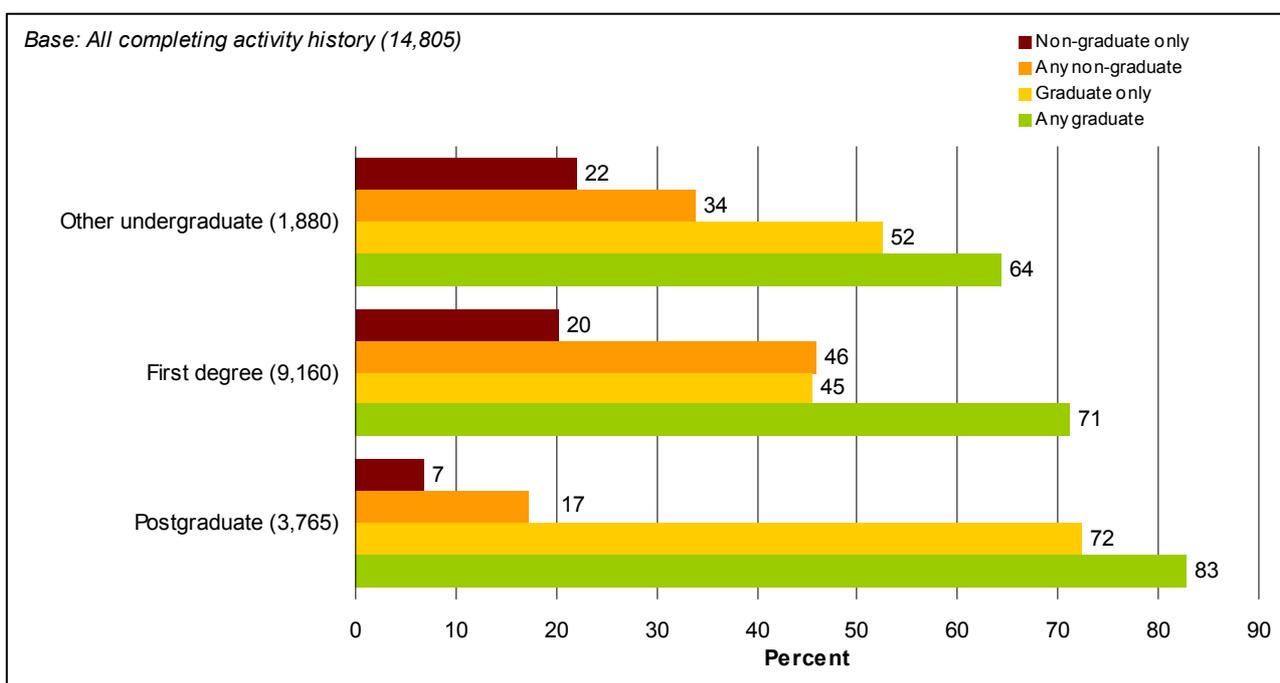


### 3.2 Experience of graduate and non-graduate occupations

Nearly three quarters (73%) of graduates who completed the activity history had had at least one job that was classified as a 'graduate occupation' (including their current activity) and 38% had had a job classified as 'non-graduate'. More than half (52%) of graduates had experienced only graduate occupations while 18% had only experienced non-graduate occupations (Table 3.3).

Experience of graduate occupations was more common among those with postgraduate qualifications than those with first degrees or other qualifications (Figure 3.2, Table 3.4). 83% of graduates with postgraduate qualifications had had a job classified as a graduate occupation, compared with 71% of those with a first degree and 64% of those with other undergraduate qualifications. Graduates with postgraduate qualifications were also more likely than those with first degrees or other undergraduate qualifications to have only had graduate occupations (72% compared with 45% and 52%). A fifth (20%) of graduates with a first degree had only experienced non-graduate occupations compared with 7% of those with postgraduate qualifications. Among graduates with first degrees, graduates in Medicine and dentistry were particularly likely to have only experienced graduate occupations (91%).

Figure 3.2 Experience of graduate and non-graduate occupations



## 4. Satisfaction

This chapter looks at graduates' satisfaction with their higher education experience and career since leaving higher education. Graduates were asked how likely it would now be that they would have chosen a different subject, qualification or institution, and, also how likely it would be that they now would do something other than study, if they were to choose again. Finally, graduates were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their career to date.

### 4.1 Likelihood of choosing different subject

The majority of graduates would not have changed the subject they studied if they were choosing to take their course again. 14% of graduates felt it was 'very likely' that they would have chosen a different subject while 15% felt it was 'likely' (Figure 4.1, [Table 4.1](#)).

Graduates who were assumed to be unemployed were more likely than those in other activities to feel that they would have chosen a different subject (23% thought it 'very likely' and 28% 'likely') ([Table 4.1](#)).

A quarter (25%) of graduates in graduate occupations thought it very likely or likely that they would now have chosen a different subject and this rose to 41% among those in non-graduate occupations ([Table 4.2](#)).

Subject choice was more likely to be regretted by graduates who had obtained first degrees or other undergraduate qualifications than those with postgraduate qualifications. Just 7% of graduates with postgraduate qualifications thought it 'very likely' they would have chosen a different subject, compared with 16% of those with first degrees and 14% of those with other undergraduate qualifications ([Table 4.3](#)).

Among graduates with first degrees, attitudes to subject choice varied to some extent by subject studied ([Table 4.3](#)). Subjects for which higher proportions of graduates said it was very likely they would have chosen a different subject were Mass Communications and Documentation (27%) and Computer Science (26%). Subjects for which lower proportions of graduates were very likely to have chosen a different subject were Medicine and Dentistry (9%), Subjects allied to Medicine; Architecture, building and planning; and Education (all 10%).

### 4.2 Likelihood of choosing a different institution

Just over one in five (22%) graduates thought it likely they would now have chosen to study at a different institution, with 8% saying it was 'very likely' and 14% 'likely' (Figure 4.1, [Table 4.4](#)).

Graduates in non-graduate occupations were slightly more likely than those in graduate occupations to feel that they would have chosen a different institution (26% of those in non-graduate occupations thought it was 'very likely' or 'likely' compared with 20% in graduate occupations) ([Table 4.5](#)).

Retrospective feelings about institution choice varied by qualification level ([Table 4.6](#)). Graduates with postgraduate qualifications were least likely to feel that they would have chosen a different institution (17% thought it 'very likely' or 'likely' compared with 22% of those with first degrees and 26% of those with other undergraduate qualifications). The proportion of those with other undergraduate qualifications who were 'very likely' or 'likely' to have chosen a different institution was higher than for those with first degrees (26% compared with 22%).

### 4.3 Likelihood of choosing different qualification type

Nearly one in ten (9%) graduates thought it 'very likely' that they would now have chosen to study for a different type of qualification while 14% thought it was 'likely' (Figure 4.1, [Table 4.7](#)).

Graduates who were assumed to be unemployed were more likely than those in other activities to say that they would have chosen a different qualification type (20% thought it 'very likely' and 15% 'quite likely') ([Table 4.7](#)).

28% of graduates in non-graduate occupations thought it 'very likely' or 'likely' that they would have chosen a different type of qualification compared with 21% of those in graduate occupations ([Table 4.8](#)).

Dissatisfaction with choice of qualification type was higher among those with other undergraduate qualifications than those with a first degree or postgraduate qualifications. 16% of those with other undergraduate qualifications were 'very likely' to have chosen a different qualification type compared with 8% of those with a first degree and 7% of those with postgraduate qualifications) ([Table 4.9](#)).

## 4.4 Likelihood of doing something other than study, training or research

Most graduates would not have chosen to do something other than training, study or research if choosing their course again. Just 5% thought it ‘very likely’ they would do this and 10% thought it ‘likely’ (Figure 4.1, [Table 4.10](#)).

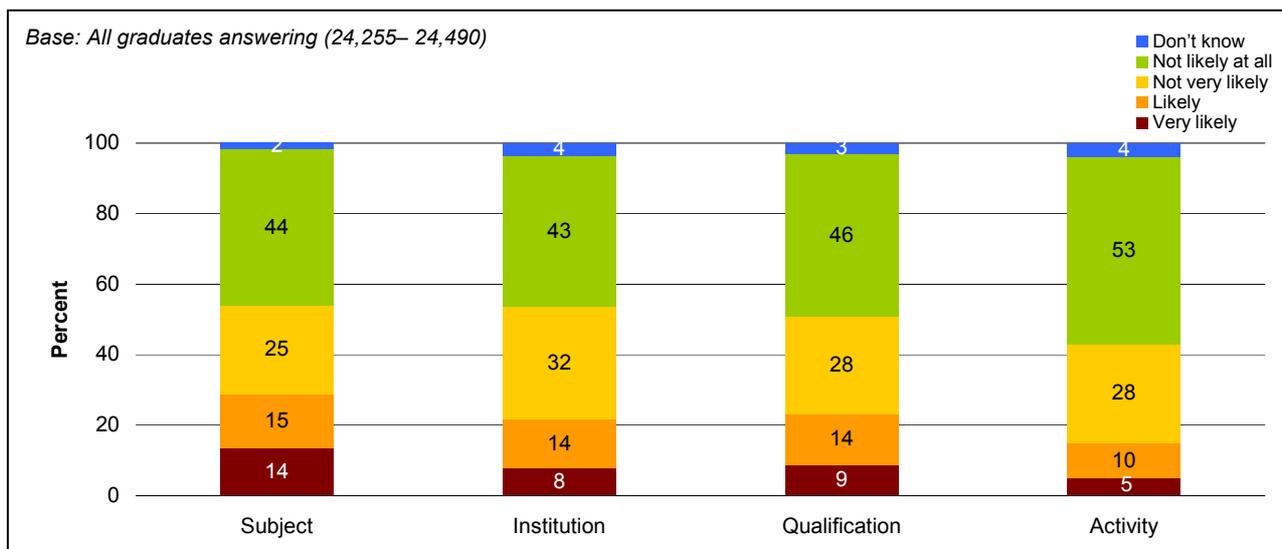
A higher proportion of graduates who were assumed to be unemployed than of those in other activities thought it likely they would have chosen to do something else (12% thought it ‘very likely’ and 16% ‘likely’) ([Table 4.10](#)).

12% of graduates in graduate occupations thought it ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ that they would have chosen to do something other than study and this rose to 23% among those in non-graduate occupations ([Table 4.11](#)).

Graduates with other undergraduate qualifications were more likely than those with postgraduate qualifications or a first degree to think that they would have chosen to do something other than study. Just over a fifth (21%) of graduates with other undergraduate qualifications thought it ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ they would have done something else, compared with 15% of those with a first degree and 13% of those with postgraduate qualifications ([Table 4.12](#)).

Among graduates with a first degree, the proportions who thought it was ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ that they would have chosen to do something else were higher for Computer Science (21%), Mass Communications and Documentation (21%) and Creative Arts and Design (20%) than for some other subjects. Just 5% of graduates with a first degree in Medicine and Dentistry would have chosen to do something other than study (NB this proportion is not significantly smaller than for all other subjects).

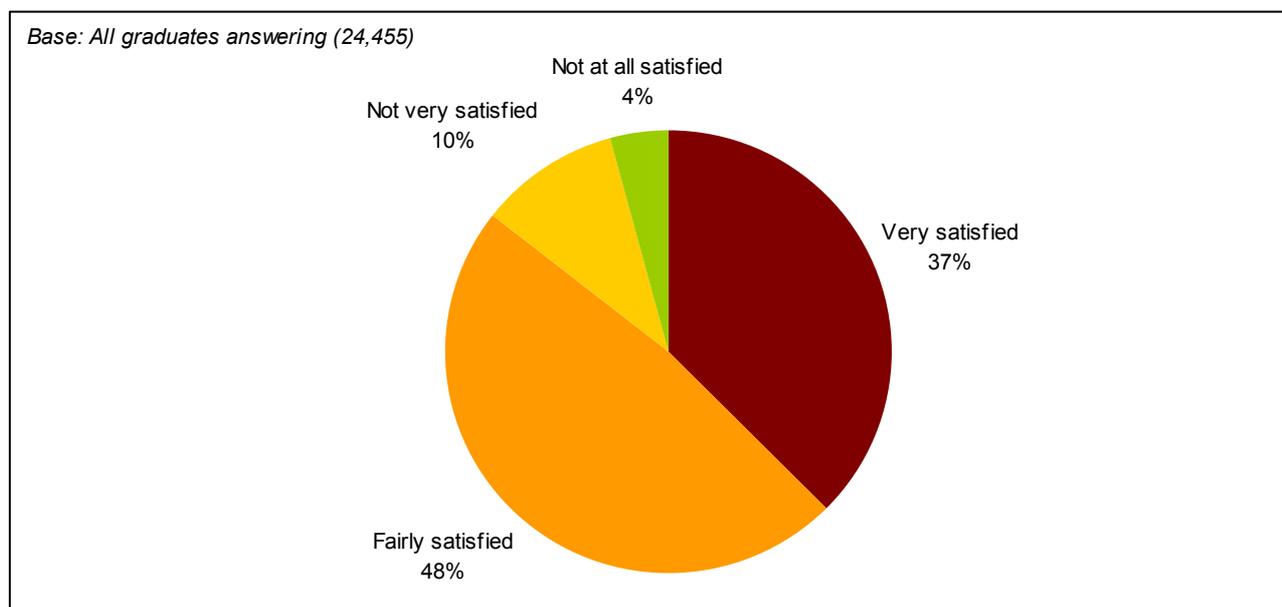
**Figure 4.1 Likelihood of now choosing differently if choosing course again**



## 4.5 Overall satisfaction with career

Most graduates were satisfied with their career to date. 37% were 'very satisfied' while almost half (48%) were 'fairly satisfied' (Figure 4.2, [Table 4.13](#)).

**Figure 4.2 Overall satisfaction with career to date**



Female graduates were slightly more likely than male graduates to be 'very satisfied' with their careers (40% of females compared with 34% of males) although the proportions who were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied were not significantly different (86% of females and 85% of males) ([Table 4.13](#)).

Black graduates were less likely than White or Asian graduates to be satisfied with their career to date. Just under three-quarters (73%) of Black graduates described themselves as 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied compared with 86% of White graduates and 83% of Asian graduates ([Table 4.14](#)).

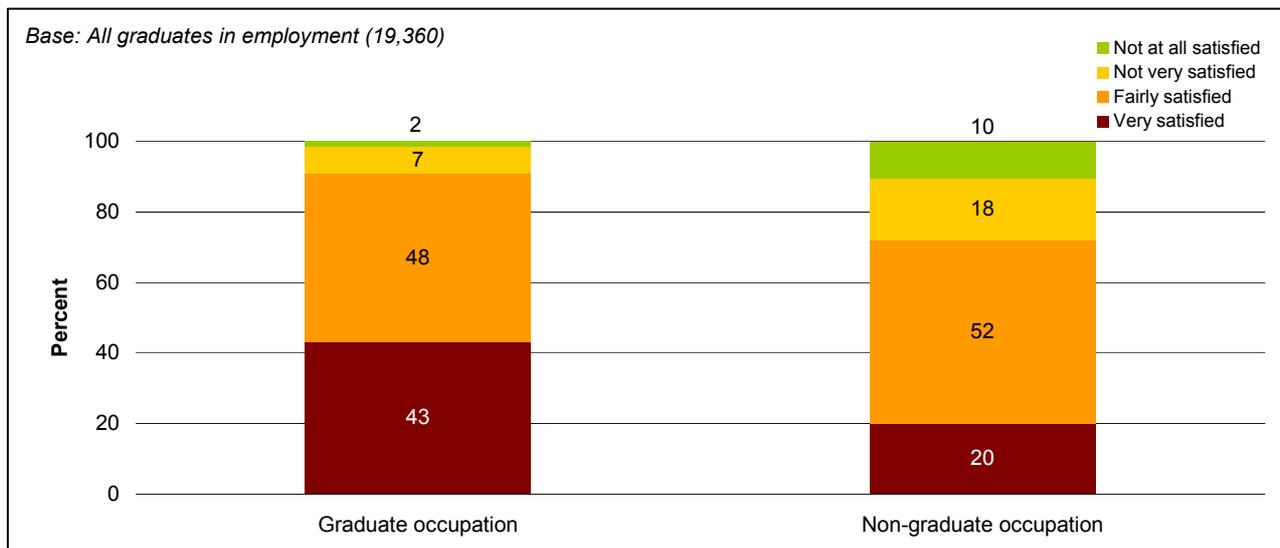
Graduates with postgraduate qualifications tended to be more satisfied with their careers than those with a first degree or other undergraduate qualifications (44% of those with postgraduate qualifications were 'very satisfied' compared with 36% of those with a first degree and 35% of those with other undergraduate qualifications) ([Table 4.16](#)).

Career satisfaction was lower among those whose current activity was assumed to be unemployment than among those in other activities, with just 12% of this group describing themselves as 'very satisfied' ([Table 4.17](#)). Graduates in part-time employment were less likely than those in full-time employment to be 'very satisfied' with their careers (29% compared with 39%).

Career satisfaction was higher among graduates in employment classified as 'graduate occupations' than those in employment classified as 'non-graduate'. More than two-fifths (43%) of those in graduate occupations were 'very satisfied' with their career to date compared with one fifth (20%) of those in non-graduate occupations (Figure 4.3, [Table 4.18](#)).

Career satisfaction was higher among graduates with higher salary levels. More than half (54%) of graduates earning above £50,000 described themselves as 'very satisfied' with their career to date, compared with just over a quarter (26%) earning less than £10,000 ([Table 4.19](#)).

**Figure 4.3 Overall satisfaction with career by occupation classification**



## Definitions

The **HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) Early Survey target population** contained all United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU) domiciled students reported to HESA for the reporting period 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003 as obtaining relevant qualifications and whose study was full-time or part-time (including sandwich students and those writing-up theses). Awards from dormant status were not included in the target population.

**Relevant qualifications** for inclusion in the DLHE Early Survey were postgraduate degrees, postgraduate diplomas and certificates, Postgraduate Certificates in Education (PGCE), first degrees (excludes intercalated degrees), Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), Foundation Degrees, Higher National Diplomas (HND) or Higher National Certificates (HNC). The population for the DLHE Early Survey did not represent the full cohort graduating during the reporting period; examples of those excluded were professional qualifications (e.g. associate membership or membership of a body such as the Institute of Bankers) and undergraduate diplomas and certificates (other than Foundation Degrees, HND, DipHE, HNC and CertHE).

The reference date for the 2002/03 DLHE Early Survey was 15 January 2004.

The **DLHE Longitudinal Survey** was based upon a sample of around 62,000 graduates (20% of those who responded to the DLHE Early Survey). Responses were received from 24,825 of the sample, a response rate of 40%. The sample was designed by the National Centre for Social Research guided by the requirements of the key statutory stakeholders in the survey.

The reference date for the DLHE Longitudinal Survey was 27 November 2006.

## Rounding strategy

Due to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, HESA implements a strategy in published and released tabulations designed to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. These data are derived from the HESA non-statutory populations and may differ slightly from those published by related statutory bodies. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest multiply of 5. A summary of this strategy is as follows:

- 0, 1, 2 are rounded to 0
- All other numbers are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5

So for example 3 is represented as 5, 22 is represented as 20, 3286 is represented as 3285 while 0, 20, 55, 3510 remain unchanged.

This rounding strategy is also applied to total figures; the consequence of which is that the sum of numbers in each row or column will rarely match the total shown precisely. Note that subject level data calculated by apportionment will also be rounded in accordance with this strategy.

Average values, proportions and FTE values prepared by HESA are not affected by the above strategy, and are calculated on precise raw numbers. However, percentages calculated on populations which contain 52 or fewer individuals are suppressed and represented as '..' as are averages based on populations of 7 or fewer.

## Level of qualification obtained

**Postgraduate** qualifications are doctorate degrees, masters degrees, higher bachelors degrees, postgraduate diplomas and certificates, and PGCE.

**First degrees** are first degrees, first degrees with eligibility to register to practice (doctor/dentist/veterinary surgeon), first degrees with qualified teacher status (QTS)/registration with the General Teaching Council (GTC), enhanced first degrees and first degrees obtained concurrently with diplomas.

**Other undergraduate** qualifications are Foundation Degrees and all other higher education qualifications not included above which are within the scope of the DLHE return.

## Age

Age is as at 31 July 2003.

## Domicile

Domicile data was supplied to HESA in the form of postcodes (UK domiciled students) or country codes. Postcodes were mapped to counties, unitary authorities and UK nations following consultation with Geoplan Postcode Marketing. Countries were mapped to geographical regions following consultation with the Department for Education and Skills. Where no data was supplied about the student's domicile, fee eligibility was used to determine whether domicile was European Union, including the UK, or not.

**UK domiciled** students were those whose normal residence was in the UK, including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Of those students who were not UK domiciled, other EU students were those whose normal residence was in countries which were European Union members as at 1 December 2002. Non-EU students were those whose normal residence prior to commencing their programme of study was outside the EU.

## Subject areas

In 2002/03 a new subject classification was introduced called the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS). This subject classification looks similar to that previously published but has been devised in a different way. Therefore subject data is not comparable to that previously published.

Additionally, from 2002/03, a new procedure of apportionment was introduced. Under apportionment, each headcount is, where necessary, divided in a way that in broad-brush terms reflects the pattern of a split programme. This is analogous to the use of FTE calculations, but should not be confused with them, since the splits used for apportionment are conventional rather than data-based.

For split programmes not involving an initial teacher training (ITT) component, the apportionment algorithm is as follows:

- 50%:50% for a balanced two-way split;
- 66.667%:33.333% for a major/minor two-way split;
- 33.333%:33.333%:33.333% for a balanced three-way split.

ITT students at undergraduate level who also have a specialism subject recorded (typically, secondary ITT students) are apportioned 50% to the 'Education' subject area and the remaining 50% is further apportioned according to the algorithm for non-ITT students. Where no subject other than education is recorded, or where the student is on a PGCE course, apportionment is 100% to the 'Education' subject area.

## Location of institution

The allocation of an institution to a geographical region was done by reference to the administrative centre of that institution. There may be students registered at institutions who are studying in regions other than that of the administrative centre of the institution.

The Open University was counted as a wholly English institution. The administrative centre is located in England, although The Open University teaches throughout the UK.

## Classification of first degrees

The classification of an undergraduate degree indicates the qualification class that the student obtained. Certain qualifications obtained at first degree level are not subject to classification of award, notably medical and general degrees. These, together with ordinary degrees, were included within the unclassified category. Third class honours, fourth class honours and the pass category were aggregated. Lower second and undivided second class honours were aggregated.

## Mode of study

**Full-time** includes full-time and sandwich study, plus those writing-up theses following full-time study.

**Part-time** includes part-time study, full-time study on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, block release or studying during the evenings, plus those writing-up theses following part-time study.

## The Standard Occupational Classification

In 2003 HESA adopted the new SOC2000 Standard Occupational Classification (which replaced SOC90), for comparability of sector data with other areas of the economy. A variant of the SOC2000 was created for the coding of occupational information collected in the DLHE surveys. The classification is termed SOC (DLHE) and details are available on the HESA website.

## The Standard Industrial Classification

The Standard Industrial Classification of economic activities (SIC) provides a framework for the collection, tabulation, presentation and analysis of data about economic activities. The present version (SIC(92)) is aligned with similar classifications in all member states of the European Union and is obligatory in all cases where the UK is required to transmit to the European Commission statistics broken down by economic activity.

## Location of employment

This describes the location of the HE leaver's place of work. Data was supplied to HESA in the form of postcodes for employment in the UK or country codes. Postcodes were mapped to counties, unitary authorities, government office regions and UK nations following consultation with Geoplan Postcode Marketing. Countries were mapped to geographical regions following consultation with the Department for Education and Skills.

## Type of occupation

This was defined using four character SOC 2000 code groups.

This mapping of SOC 2000 codes was derived from Elias & Purcell's report 'SOC (HE) A Classification of occupations for studying the graduate labour market' (Institute for Employment Research, Warwick).



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