

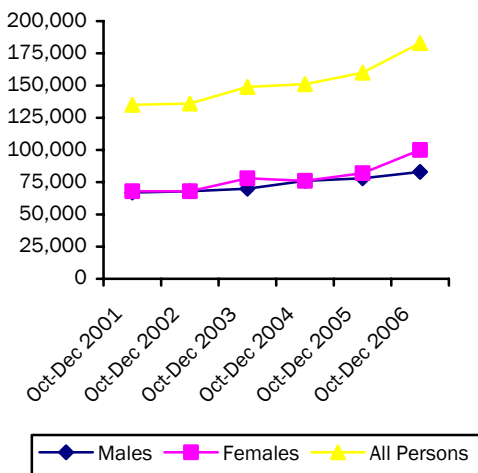
# Special Feature: Graduates

# 10

Number of NI graduates has increased by over one-third in the last five years.

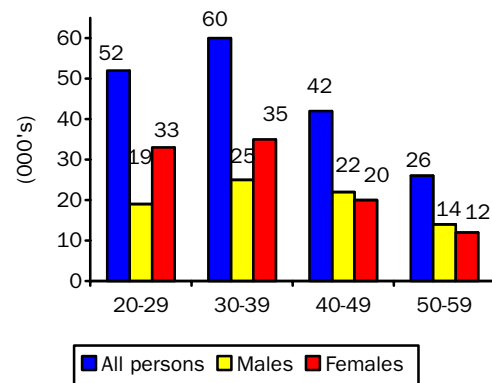
In Northern Ireland (NI) the number of graduates of working-age has increased by over one-third (36%) from 135,000 in October-December 2001 to 183,000 in October-December 2006. In contrast, the total working-age population only increased by 4% during this time. As a result, the proportion of the working-age population who are graduates has increased from 13% in October-December 2001 to 17% in October-December 2006. Whilst females accounted for 50% of graduates in 2001, this proportion had risen to 55% by 2006.

**Number of NI graduates of working age 2001 – 2006**  
Figure 19



In NI at October–December 2006, the estimated 183,000 graduates represented 17.3% of the working-age population. This was lower than the proportion of graduates in the UK working-age population which was 19.3% at October - December 2006. The proportion in NI was larger than that in Wales (15.3%), however it was smaller than that in Scotland (18.6%) and considerably lower than London which had the highest proportion of graduates (29.2%).

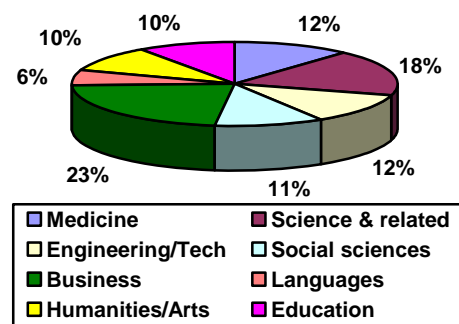
**Number of graduates of by age group October - December 2006**  
Figure 20



The 30-39 age group in NI had the largest proportion of graduates with 60,000 (33%) in October-December 2006. It is noticeable that there were more female graduates (63%) than male (37%) in the 20-29 age group, yet this relationship was reversed in the 50-59 cohort where 53% of graduates were male.

The main subject areas for degree holders were business and administration (23% or 41,000), followed by science and related degrees (18% or 32,000).

**Subject Areas of Degrees (combined and single), October – December 2006**  
Figure 21



- The working age employment rate for graduates (88.0%) is considerably higher than that for non-graduates (65.9%).

At October – December 2006 the working age employment rate of graduates in NI (88.0%) was considerably higher than that for non-graduates (65.9%). For graduates, the difference between male and female working age employment rates (90.3% and 86.1% respectively) is not nearly as marked as the difference for non-graduates (71.6% and 59.6% respectively). The employment rate for NI graduates is above the UK average (88.0% for NI and 87.3% for UK). However, NI had the second lowest employment rate for non-graduates across the regions at 65.9%. This is over five percentage points lower than the UK average (71.5%).

**Graduate & Non-graduate working age employment rates for UK regions, October - December 2006**  
Figure 22

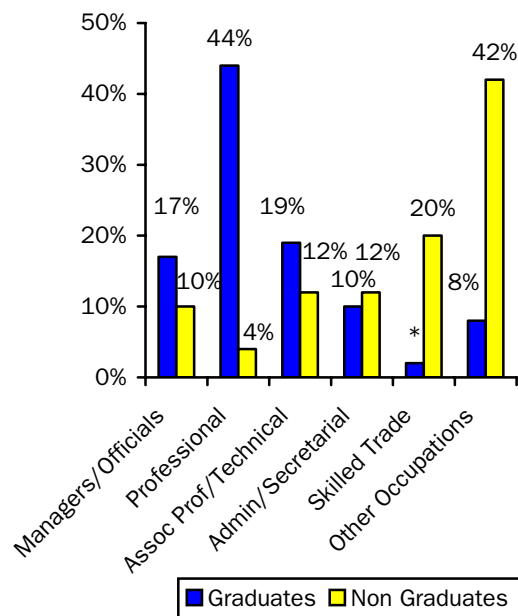


- Almost four-fifths of female graduates work full-time compared to just 55% of female non-graduates.

Overall, the majority of both graduates and non-graduates were employees (91% and 81% respectively). However, non-graduates were more likely to be self-employed than graduates (17% and 9% respectively). Proportionately more graduates worked full-time than non-graduates (89% compared to 76%) and there was a notable difference for females with almost four-fifths (79%) of female graduates working full-time compared to just 55% of female non-graduates.

Just over one half of graduates (53%) worked in the private sector, compared to three-quarters of non-graduates. An estimated 80% of graduates are employed in the top three occupational groups, compared to only one-quarter of non-graduates. 17% of graduates are employed as Managers and Senior Officials compared to 10% of non-graduates. The major difference occurs in Professional occupations, where 44% of graduates are employed, compared to only 4% of non-graduates.

**Occupational groups for graduates and non-graduates, October – December 2006**  
Figure 23

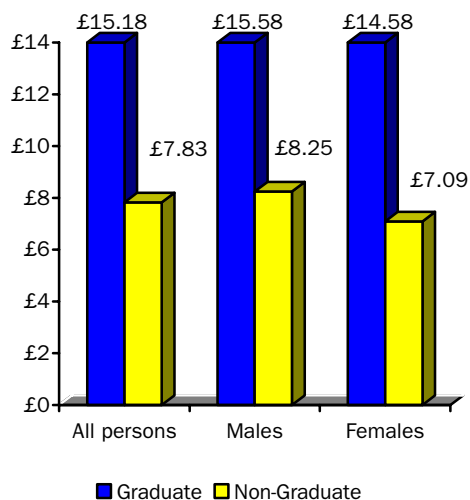


A higher proportion of graduates (86%) than non-graduates (69%) are employed in the Service Sector, with the Public Administration, Education and Health sectors accounting for approximately one half of all graduates (51%). The proportion of non-graduates employed in these sectors is much lower (28%).

- **The average gross weekly earnings of graduates (£558) exceeded that of non-graduates (£308) by approximately 81%.**

On average graduates earn approximately £13,000 per year more than non-graduates. Average gross weekly earnings of graduates were 81% more than that for non-graduates (£558 compared to £308 per week respectively) and the hourly rate for graduates (£15.18) was 94% higher than that of non-graduates (£7.83). The gender pay gap is evident in weekly earnings and hourly rates of pay. Hourly rates of pay reveal that on average, male graduates were paid 7% more than female graduates (£15.58 per hour compared with £14.58 per hour). For non-graduates the gender differential was larger at 16%, with males earning on average £8.25 per hour and females earning £7.09 per hour.

**Gross hourly pay of graduates and non-graduates of working age, October – December 2006**  
Figure 24



Note: Weekly and Hourly Earnings are based on median figures