

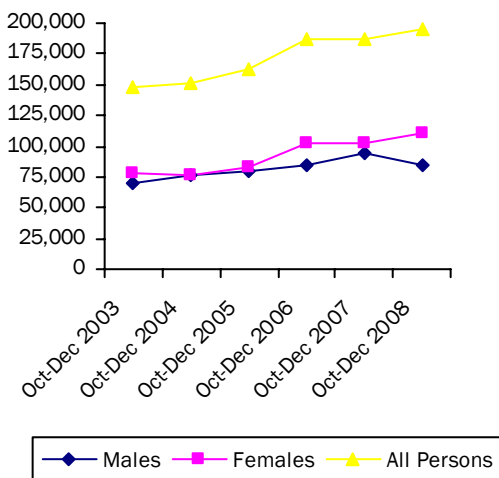
# Special Feature: Graduates

# 10

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

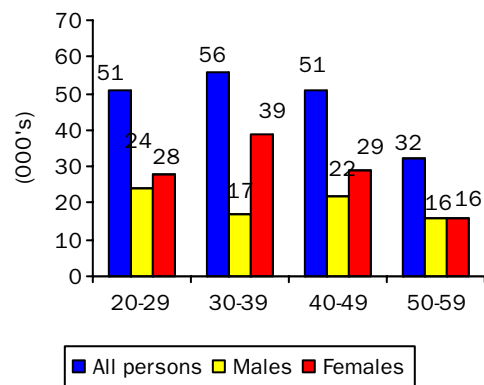
In Northern Ireland (NI) the number of graduates of working-age has increased by 47,000 (31%) from 148,000 in October-December 2003 to 195,000 in October-December 2008. In contrast, the total working-age population only increased by 5% during this time. As a result, the proportion of the working-age population who are graduates has increased from 14% in October-December 2003 to 18% in October-December 2008. Whilst females accounted for 53% of graduates in 2003, this proportion had risen to 57% by 2008.

**Number of NI graduates of working age 2003 – 2008**  
Figure 19



In NI at October–December 2008, the estimated 195,000 graduates represented 17.9% of the working-age population. This was lower than the equivalent proportion of graduates in the UK working-age population (20.7%). The proportion in NI was fifth lowest of all the UK regions. It was similar to the proportion in Wales (18.0%), smaller than that in Scotland (19.8%) and considerably lower than London which had the highest proportion of graduates (33.0%).

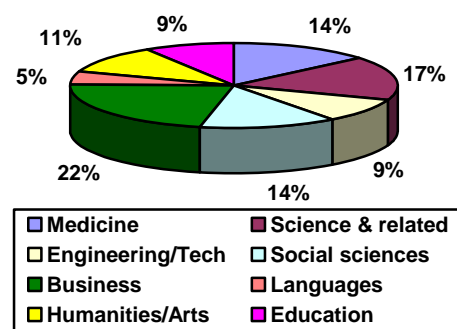
**Number of graduates of by age group October - December 2008**  
Figure 20



The 30-39 age group in NI had the largest proportion of graduates with 56,000 (28%) in October-December 2008. It is noticeable that there were more female graduates than male in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups, yet there were equal numbers in the 50-59 age group.

The main subject areas for degree holders were business and administration (22% or 43,000), followed by science and related degrees (17% or 32,000).

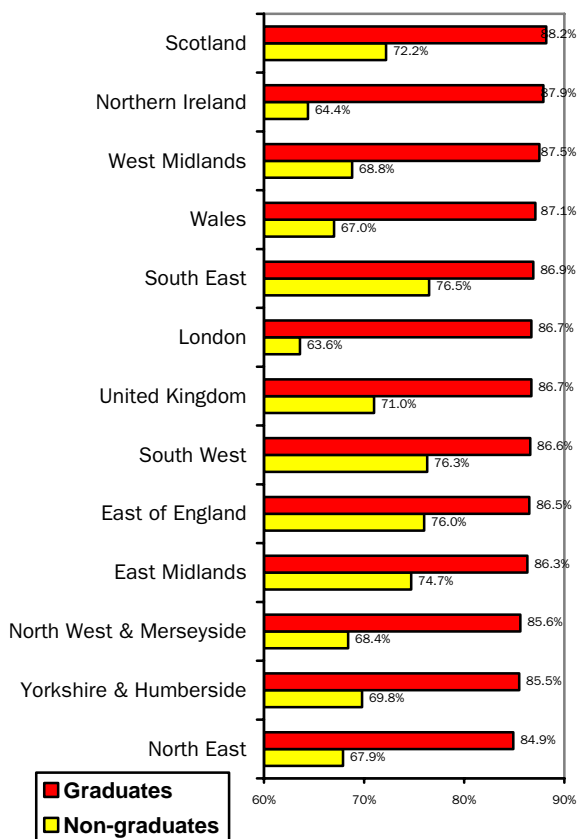
**Subject Areas of Degrees (combined and single), October – December 2008**  
Figure 21



- The working age employment rate for graduates (87.9%) is considerably higher than that for non-graduates (64.4%).

At October – December 2008 the working age employment rate of graduates in NI (87.9%) was considerably higher than that for non-graduates (64.4%). For graduates, there was a higher proportion of working age females in employment (90.7%), compared to males (84.3%). In contrast, the proportion of male non-graduates in employment (69.8%) was higher than the figure for female non-graduates (58.3%). The employment rate for NI graduates (87.9%) is above the UK average (86.7%). However, NI had the second lowest employment rate for non-graduates across the regions at 64.4%. This is over six percentage points lower than the UK average (71.0%).

**Graduate & Non-graduate working age employment rates for UK regions, October - December 2008**  
Figure 22

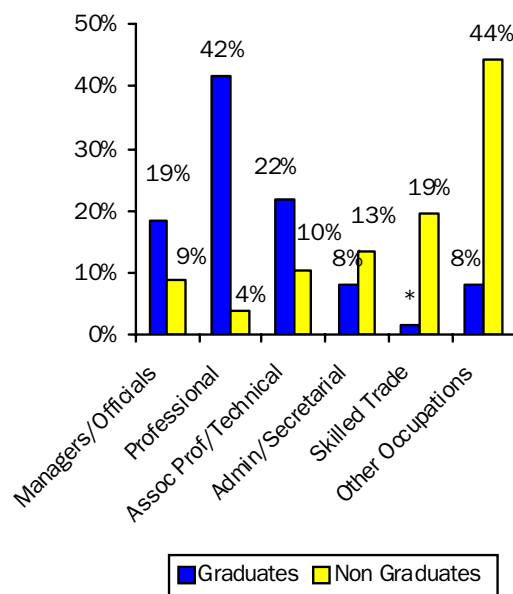


- Four-fifths (80%) of female graduates work full-time compared to just 56% of female non-graduates.

Overall, the majority of both graduates and non-graduates were employees (89% and 83% respectively). However, non-graduates were more likely to be self-employed than graduates (15% and 10% respectively). Proportionately more graduates worked full-time than non-graduates (86% compared to 76%) and there was a notable difference for females with four-fifths (80%) of female graduates working full-time compared to just 56% of female non-graduates.

Just under one half of graduates (47%) worked in the public sector, compared to one-quarter (24%) of non-graduates. An estimated 82% of graduates are employed in the top three occupational groups, compared to 23% of non-graduates. 19% of graduates are employed as Managers and Senior Officials compared to 9% of non-graduates. The major difference occurs in Professional occupations, where 42% of graduates are employed, compared to only 4% of non-graduates.

**Occupational groups for graduates and non-graduates, October – December 2008**  
Figure 23



Other occupations include: Personal Service occupations, Sales and Customer Services, Process, Plant and Machine operatives and Elementary Occupations

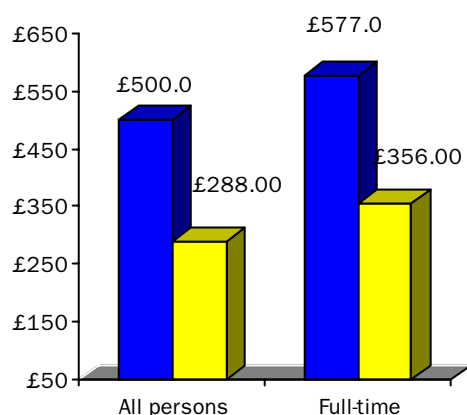
A higher proportion of graduates (89%) than non-graduates (70%) are employed in the Service Sector, with the Public Administration, Education and Health sectors accounting for approximately one half of all graduates (53%). The proportion of non-graduates employed in these sectors is much lower (30%).

- **The median average gross weekly earnings of graduate employees (£500) exceeded that of non-graduate employees (£288) by approximately 74%.**

On average graduates earn approximately £11,000 per year more than non-graduates. Average gross weekly earnings of graduates were 74% more than that for non-graduates (£500 compared to £288 per week respectively) and the hourly rate for graduates (£14.4) was 83% higher than that of non-graduates (£7.9).

When comparing gross weekly earnings, it is beneficial to separate full-time and part-time employees, as the number of hours worked per week by these categories may differ significantly. When this split is examined, full-time graduates earn £577, which is 62% higher than the estimate for full-time non-graduates (£356).

**Median gross weekly pay of graduate and non-graduate employees of working age.**  
**October – December 2008**  
**Figure 24**



Note: Weekly and Hourly Earnings are based on median figures