

**Enhancing  
employability**

**Examples from  
Northumbria  
University, UK**

**Debbie Morgan**



# Introducing Northumbria

- With 35,000 students Northumbria is the sixth largest provider of Higher Education in Britain
- The University is the largest provider of Higher Education in Hong Kong, and has substantial operations in Malaysia, North Africa and the Caribbean
- Northumbria is investing £17m in new research active staff over three years

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/international](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international)

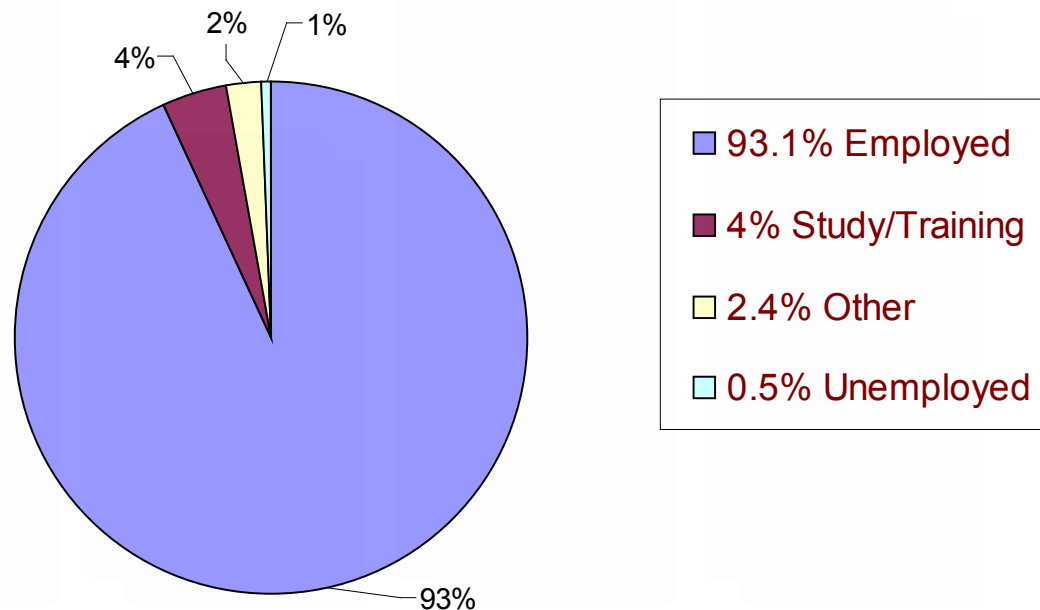
# Newcastle upon Tyne

- Regional Capital of NE England



# Employment Prospects

## Graduate Activity 3 years after graduation

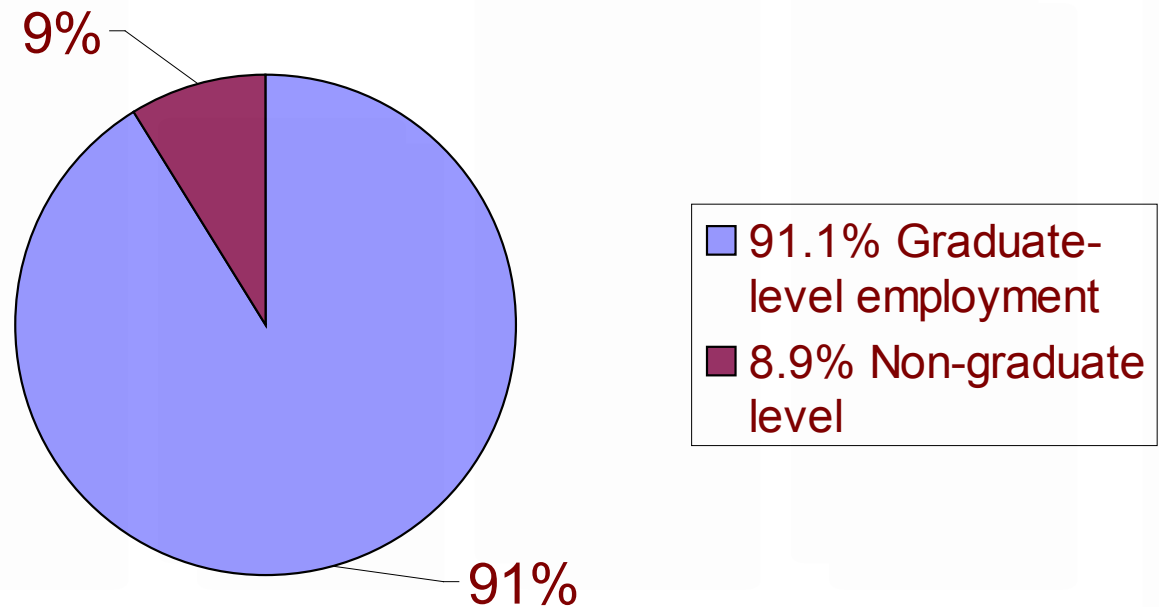


[www.northumbria.ac.uk/international](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international)

From an internal survey of 2005 Graduates from Northumbria University carried out in July / August 2008 to determine levels of graduate employment three years after graduating.

# Employment Prospects

## Graduate / Non-Graduate Jobs



[www.northumbria.ac.uk/international](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international)

Of the 537 graduates employed, 91.1% of these were employed in Graduate Jobs as defined by the IER SOC codes. (2008 data)

# Enhancing employability at Northumbria

- Courses have a practical focus and provide students with the kind of knowledge that employers are looking for
- Many of the qualifications we award are officially recognised by professional bodies in the UK and overseas
- Many undergraduate courses offer work placements

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/international](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international)

# Focus on .... School of Health, Community & Education Studies

- Northumbria's largest School
- Students are fit for purpose, fit for employment ..... but changes to health and social care funding may mean fewer jobs ..... students need to have **'the edge'**



# 1) International Placements & Employability

- an example from nursing



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# International placements

- To contribute to University's aim to internationalise curricula & Bologna Process (2010) ....
- 25 – 30 nursing students undertake an international placement each year.
- Erasmus (12 wk) & Non-Erasmus (4 wks).



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# Skill development & international placements

- The research project (Morgan, 2010)  
.....
- A phenomenological study which investigated student nurse experiences during an international placement.



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# Findings overview

- As part of the study it emerged that international placements facilitated students to develop skills that could enhance their employability .....



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# Findings 1: Development of Self

- Learning about self & self development
- Development of independence
- Development of confidence in self
- Becoming proactive .....
  
- *Personal growth (Callister, 2006)*
- *Personal development ( Button et al, 2005)*
- *Edgework – (Lyng 1990, 2008)*
- *Self-actualisation (Maslow, 1971, Jarvis 2006)*

## Findings 2: Developing global awareness & cultural competence

- .....Being 'the other' and integrating
- Understanding 'the other'
- Skills students felt they had not gained from UK placements.
- *Understanding culture of nursing (Grant & McKenna, 2003)*
- *Cultural competence, global socio-political & health awareness (Callister, 2006)*
- *Learning about culture & health system & nursing differences ( Button et al, 2005)*

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/international](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international)

# These skills are skills for employability

## Crossman & Clarke (2010).

- Benefits – networking, experiential learning, language acquisition, soft skills (eg. empathy)
- **Global thinking & Cultural Competence.**
- International experience **is** related to employability

# These skills are skills for employability

## King et al (2010) International student mobility literature review (HEFCE/BC)

- Identified this area was not extensively researched (UK) but survey research identifies:
- High percentages of students felt it did give them an edge &
- Employers felt it gave greater **cross-cultural sensitivity & adaptability.**

# Summary: International Placements & Employability

- International placements provide exposure to unfamiliar socio-cultural contexts & risks.
- Exposure to these risks facilitates students to develop new personal and professional skills - skills for employability.
- Challenge for us is to find ways to expand this learning opportunity to others & further research in UK and nurse education is needed.



..it gives them the edge!

(Crossman & Clarke, 2010)



[www.northumbria.ac.uk/international](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international)

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