

Graduates in Northern Ireland

Labour Force Survey, October - December 2015

Date: 2 March 2016

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Theme: Labour Market



This short topic paper addresses the labour market status of graduates in Northern Ireland (NI) during the last 8 years and describes the characteristics of this group at October - December 2015, as sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The Further Information section provides detail on sampling variability.

Key Points

- The number of graduates living in NI increased by 19% between October – December 2008 and October – December 2015.
- The proportion of those aged 16-64 who were graduates has increased from 18% in October - December 2008 to 21% in October - December 2015.
- The proportion of graduates in NI (21% of those aged 16-64) was the lowest of the twelve UK regions. It was considerably lower than London, which had the highest proportion of graduates (43%).
- The working age employment rate for graduates living in NI (87%) was considerably higher than that for non-graduates (64%).
- Three quarters (75%) of female graduates in NI worked full-time compared to just 54% of female non-graduates.
- In October – December 2015, the working age employment rate for graduates living in NI (87%) was similar to the UK average (86%). However, NI had the second lowest employment rate for non-graduates across the regions at 64%, which was six percentage points lower than the UK average (70%).
- Of the 12 UK regions, NI had the highest percentage of graduates working in the public sector.
- Full-time graduate employees earned on average £9,000 more annually than those in full-time employment who didn't have a degree.

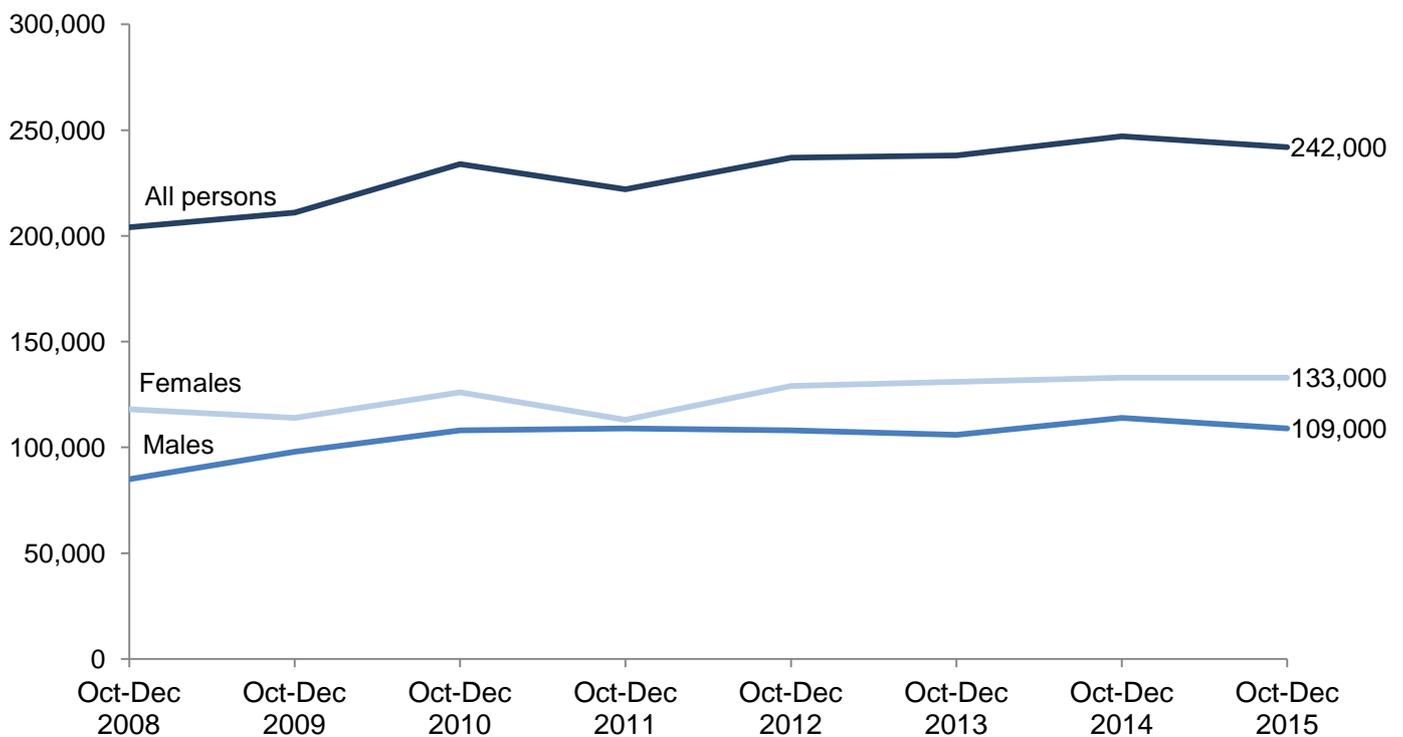
Graduates in Northern Ireland

Definition of graduates: people whose highest qualification is an undergraduate degree at Bachelor's level or hold a higher degree.

Definition of non-graduates: those whose highest qualification is below undergraduate level (i.e. NQF Level 5 or below).

- The LFS estimated that there were 242,000 graduates, aged 16-64, in Northern Ireland at October – December 2015. This has increased by 38,000 (19%) from 204,000 in October - December 2008.
- The proportion of the working-age population who were graduates has increased from 18% in October - December 2008 to 21% in October - December 2015.

Figure 1: Number of graduates living in NI (16-64), 2008-2015

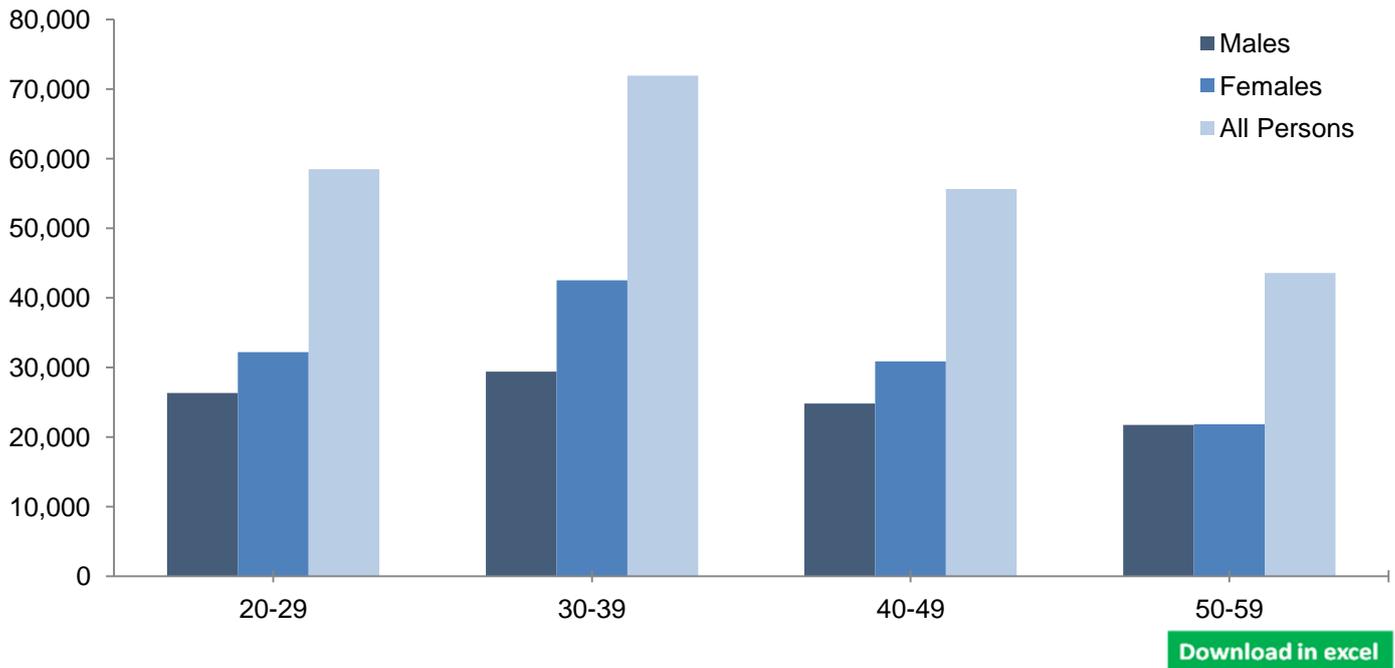


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Graduates by age and sex

- Females accounted for 58% of graduates in 2008 and 55% by 2015.
- The 30-39 age group in NI had the largest proportion of graduates with 72,000 (30%) in October - December 2015.
- It is noticeable that there were more female graduates than male in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups.

Figure 2: Number of graduates by age and sex, October - December 2015



Economic status of graduates

- In October – December 2015, the working age employment rate for graduates (87%) was considerably higher than that for non-graduates (64%).
- Of those in employment, the majority of both graduates and non-graduates were employees (89% and 86% respectively).
- However, non-graduates were more likely to be self-employed than graduates (13% and 10% respectively).

Table 1: Labour market status for graduates and non-graduates (16-64), October – December 2015

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
In employment	97,000	113,000	210,000	327,000	250,000	577,000
- Employee	84,000	104,000	188,000	263,000	230,000	493,000
- Self-employed	13,000	*	21,000	56,000	18,000	74,000
ILO unemployed	*	*	*	24,000	18,000	43,000
Inactive	8,000	16,000	24,000	105,000	180,000	284,000
Total	109,000	133,000	242,000	456,000	448,000	904,000

* Sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate.

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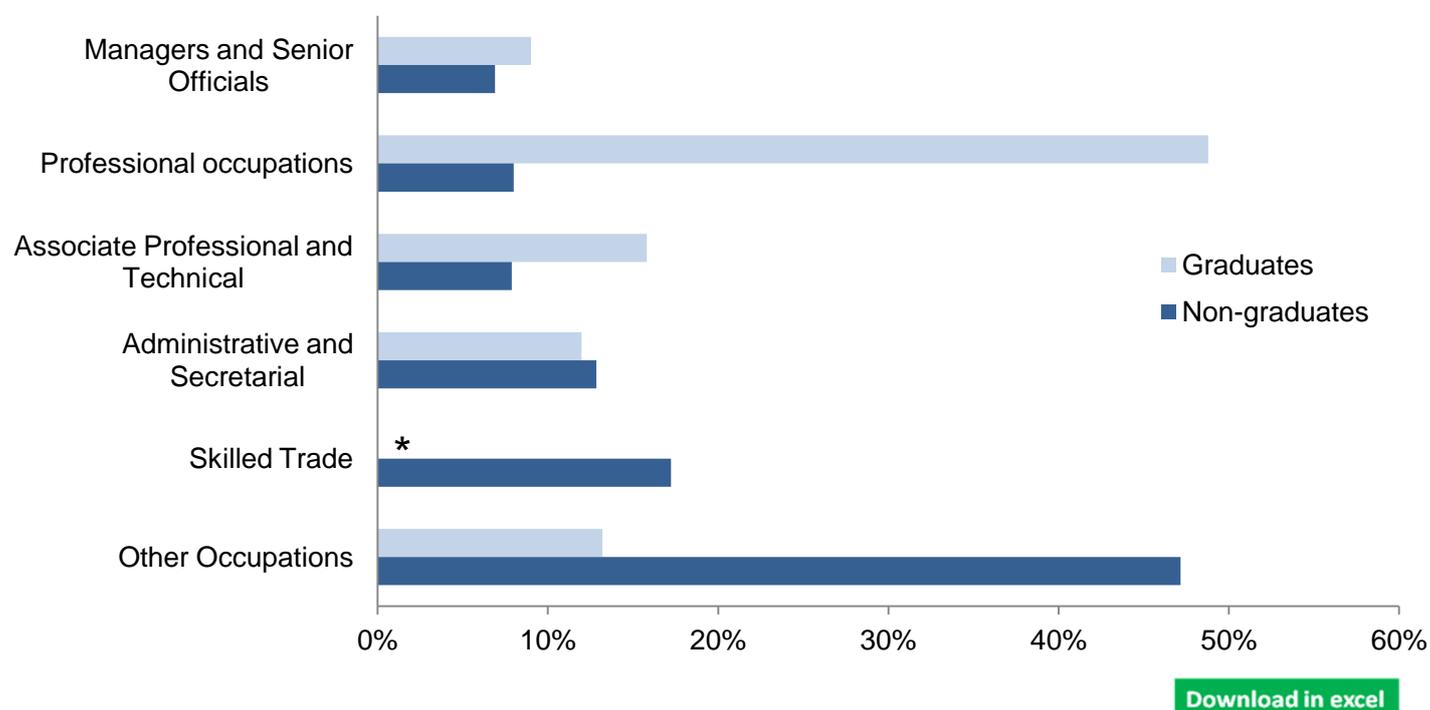
Totals may not sum due to rounding, which is to the nearest 1,000.

- For graduates, there were similar proportions of working age females in employment (85%) to males (89%) compared to the proportion of male non-graduates in employment (72%) to female non-graduates (56%).
- Proportionately more graduates worked full-time than non-graduates (84% compared to 74%) and there was a notable difference for females (75% graduates compared to 54% non-graduates).

Graduates by industry and occupation

- The public administration, education and health sectors accounted for over half of employed graduates (52%). The proportion of non-graduates employed in these sectors was much lower (27%).
- A higher proportion of employed graduates (49%) worked in the public sector, compared to non-graduates (20%).
- The largest occupation group for graduates was professional occupations, where 49% of graduates were employed, compared to only 8% of non-graduates.

Figure 3: Occupational groups for graduates & non-graduates, October - December 2015



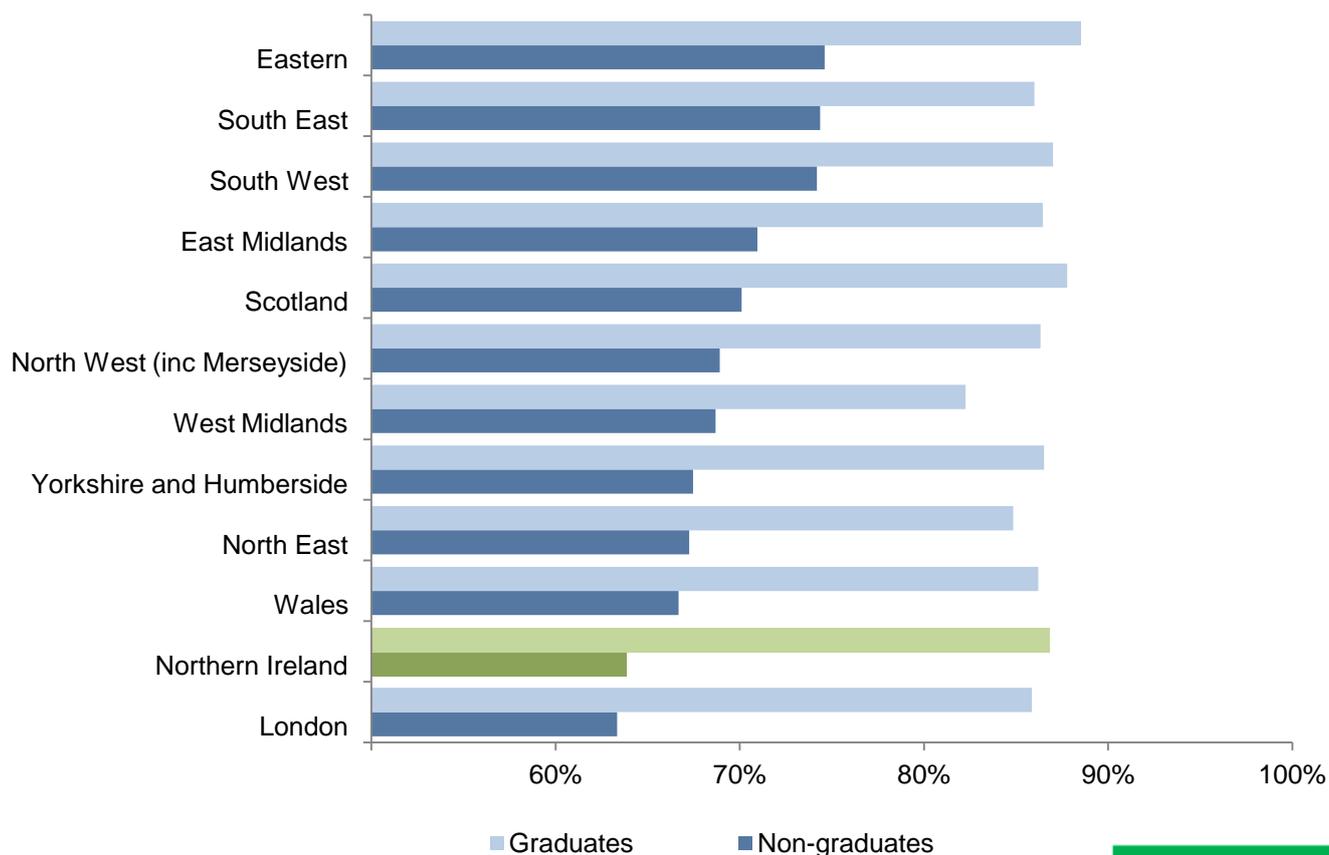
Other occupations include: personal service occupations, sales & customer services, process, plant & machine operatives and elementary occupations

* Sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate.

Comparison with United Kingdom regions

- In October – December 2015, the working age employment rate for Graduates living in NI (87%) was similar to the UK average (86%). However, NI had the second lowest employment rate for non-graduates across the regions at 64%, which was six percentage points lower than the UK average (70%).

Figure 4: Graduate & non-graduate working age employment rates by UK region, October - December 2015



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- In NI at October - December 2015, the estimated 242,000 graduates represented 21% of the 16-64 population. This was lower than the equivalent proportion of graduates in the UK 16-64 population (28%).
- The proportion of graduates in NI was lowest of the twelve UK regions. It was considerably lower than London, which had the highest proportion of graduates (43%).
- Northern Ireland had a higher percentage of graduates working in the public sector (49%) than the UK average (33%) and was the highest of the twelve UK regions.

Graduate income

- On average full-time graduates earned over £9,000 per year more than full-time non-graduates.
- Median gross weekly earnings of full-time graduates was £577 in October – December 2015, compared to £400 per week for full-time non-graduates.
- The hourly rate for graduates (£15.4) was higher than that of non-graduates (£9.4).

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a voluntary sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals in households. It is the most comprehensive source of information on their circumstances and work. Figures taken from the LFS are subject to sampling error that decreases as the sample size increases. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.

Table 3: Confidence interval of 16-64 graduates estimates, October - December 2015

	Value	Confidence interval	Lower limit	Upper limit
Graduates	242,000	19,000	223,000	261,000

Definitions

Graduates are people whose highest qualification is an undergraduate degree at Bachelor's level (including foreign equivalents) or a higher degree such as a Master's or PhD.

Non-graduates are those whose highest qualification is below undergraduate level (i.e. NQF Level 5 or below, including foreign equivalents). This includes higher education, A-level or equivalent, GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent, other qualifications and no qualifications.

Industry group is based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007 sectors.

Occupational group is based on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2010 major groups.

More labour market and economic statistics can be found at:

www.nisra.gov.uk/elms

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