

Postgraduate employability skills; meeting employers' needs

Dr David Docherty, Chief Executive,
CIHE

The Platonic Ideal of the Graduate

- Cross between Richard Branson, Stephen Hawking, Katharine Hepburn and Boudicca.



Commercial Acumen



Ineffable cool



Aggressive Leadership



Pitching ability

How to create the Platonic Graduate





LEADERSHIP FOR BUSINESS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Outside Plato's Test Tube

What do employers want?

- Joint CIHE/CBI Survey – Talent Fishing
- The Fuse- Igniting High Growth in the Creative, Digital and IT industries.
- Manufacturing Talent 20:30

‘One of the most crucial roles for universities is to enable graduates to learn how to learn. The majority of technical skills being taught in universities will be defunct by the time young people are ten years into their careers.’

Gavin Patterson – CEO, BT Retail

T-Shaped Graduates

‘The era where we can afford multidisciplinary groups is becoming unaffordable. We need universities to develop graduates with interdisciplinary skills, or who can lead interdisciplinary teams.’

Anne Morrison, Director of the BBC Academy

Mash-up Graduates

‘Producers, Engineers and Technologists will increasingly converge into teams working together to deliver interface, service and content – as one product – rather than different teams working in isolation and then hoping to tie the solution together.’

BBC Engineer of the Future

Leader from the front, sides, and rear

- *“leadership ... transcends all walks of life”*
- *“leaders ... are the only sustainable source of success in this changing world”*
- *“...traditional leadership models are becoming outdated.”*
- *“For the new leaders, specific academic or technical knowledge is increasingly just a part of the overall picture... we’re looking for rounded individuals with a broader skill set.”*

Jeremy Darroch, CEO of Sky, *Believe in Better*, CIHE 2010

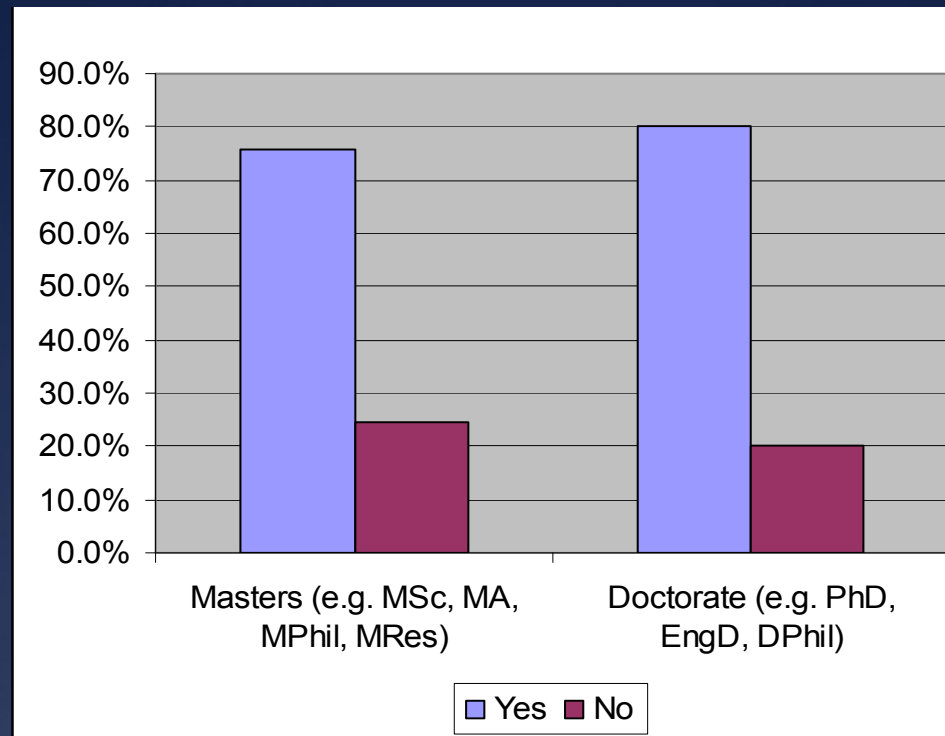
The Shape of Things to Come

- 20:30 give us only five generations of graduates to address the manufacturing challenges of the economy:

- Low Carbon
- High Tech
- Value and Service Added

Success will come from brightest and best women, ethnic minorities and immigrants.

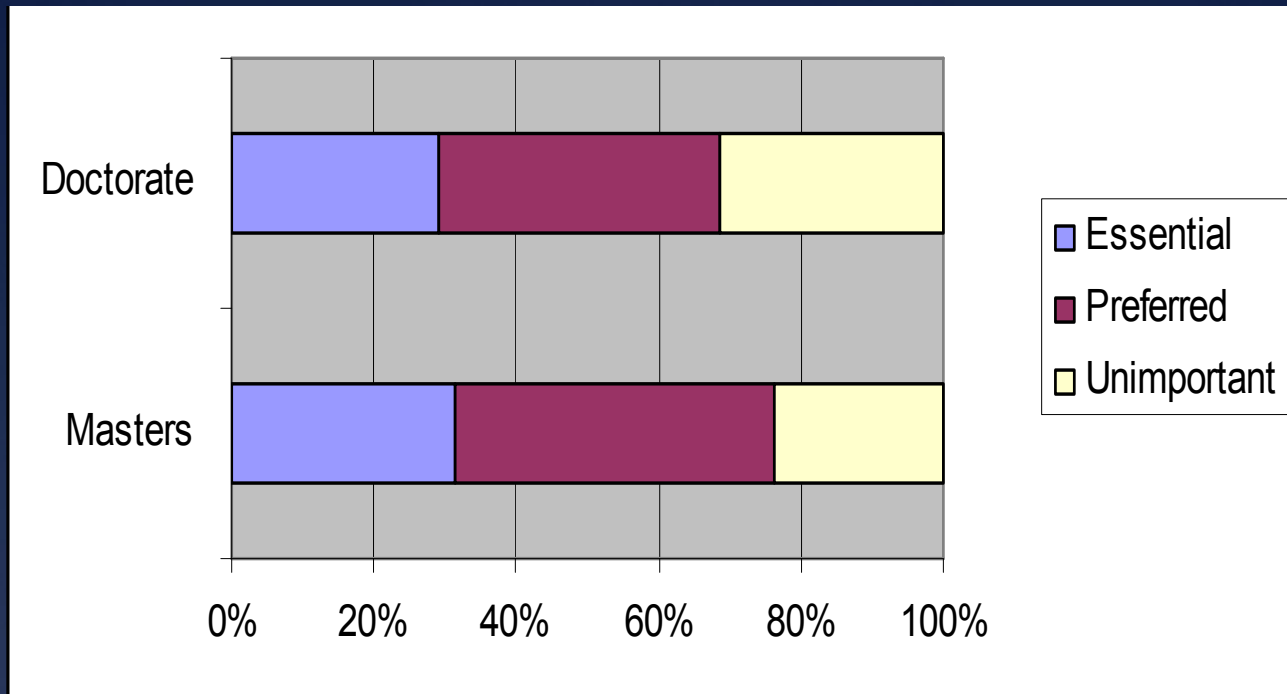
Big business likes to hire post-graduates





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The Really Good News



Three types of employers

Same Difference:

- Recruited in the same round as other graduates
- Paid the same
- Same career trajectory (though a bit more mature)

One step up:

- Some research skills or specialist knowledge or capabilities relevant to the work expected to do.
- Not differentiated from Bachelor plus work experience

Specialists wanted:

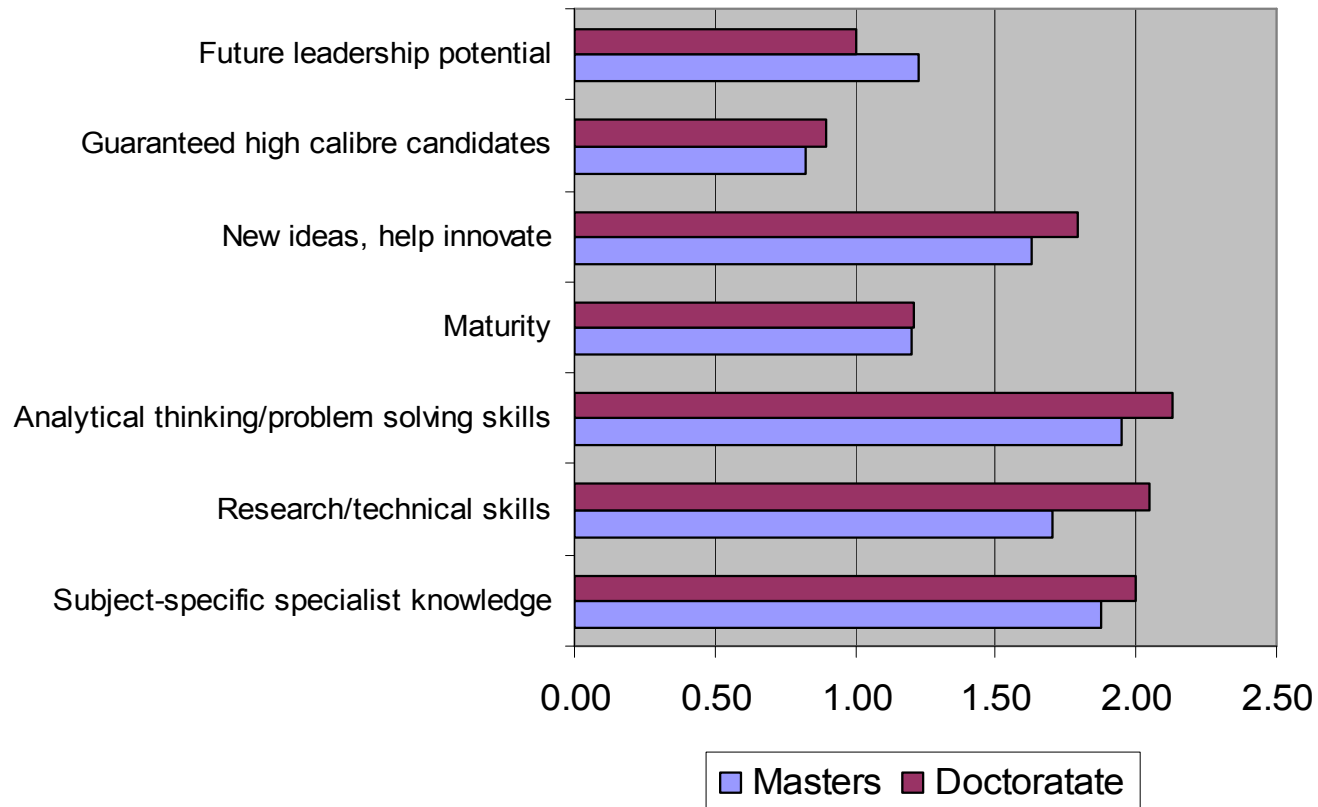
- Passionate about their science or subject
- More mature
- Solving a special problem in the business
- Leading specialists

Why are high level skills important?

*“Innovation, entrepreneurship, management,
leadership and research and development”*

Leitch Report

Value of Postgraduates



But...

There's always a but...

Question: What is the value of recruiting post grads?

	Masters	Ph.D
•Subject-specific specialist knowledge	46%	62%
•Research/technical skills	33%	56%
•Analytical thinking/problem solving skills	52%	58%
•Maturity	15%	21%
•New ideas, help innovate	23%	39%
•Guaranteed high calibre candidates	<u>6%</u>	<u>10%</u>
•Future leadership potential	<u>16%</u>	<u>9%</u>

If post-graduate education is a premium 'brand' of higher education, why isn't it a guarantor of quality in the eyes of recruiters?

What can be done?

- Best relationships are deep and long-lasting
 - joint course development;
 - guest lecturing;
 - staff secondments;
 - external supervision;
 - work placements and visits;
 - co-sponsored research projects and mentoring (no student left behind)

Think about...

- * Vocational degree graduates have a head start but knowledge shelf life is short, very short.
- * So knowing how to learn and how to apply learning to make a difference is what all employers seek.
- * Leadership skills of all kinds give a graduate the edge.
- * Continuing workforce development and mature student part time study = great opportunity.

Big Questions

- Do universities need to focus more on quality and leadership potential?
- Businesses need to become better at articulating what they need.
- We need to think long-term.
- But crucially: We must think together.