Developing and maintaining a pipeline of graduate talent

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Graduate Talent: Innovation and Skills for Competitiveness

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The pipeline metaphor: an apology

> Idea emerged from our research with SME and large graduate recruiters

> Browne, CSR, funding cuts etc. can seem very distant from day to day reality

> Employers are primarily interested in recruiting the brightest and best that *emerge* from the pipeline

> But we could begin to see a change in who enters and progresses through it

Key questions

> What does the pipeline of graduate talent look like?

> Where are the blockages?

> How might the pipeline change in the post-Browne world?

What does the pipeline of graduate talent look like?

You’d be forgiven for thinking it looks like this...

> Begins with A Levels at 17 or 18
> University full time at 18 or 19
> Graduate training programme at 21 or 22 (with a 2:1 not a 2:2)

There is a far richer mix in the pipeline

Examples from HESA data for 2008/9:

> Part time: 558,790 UK undergraduates

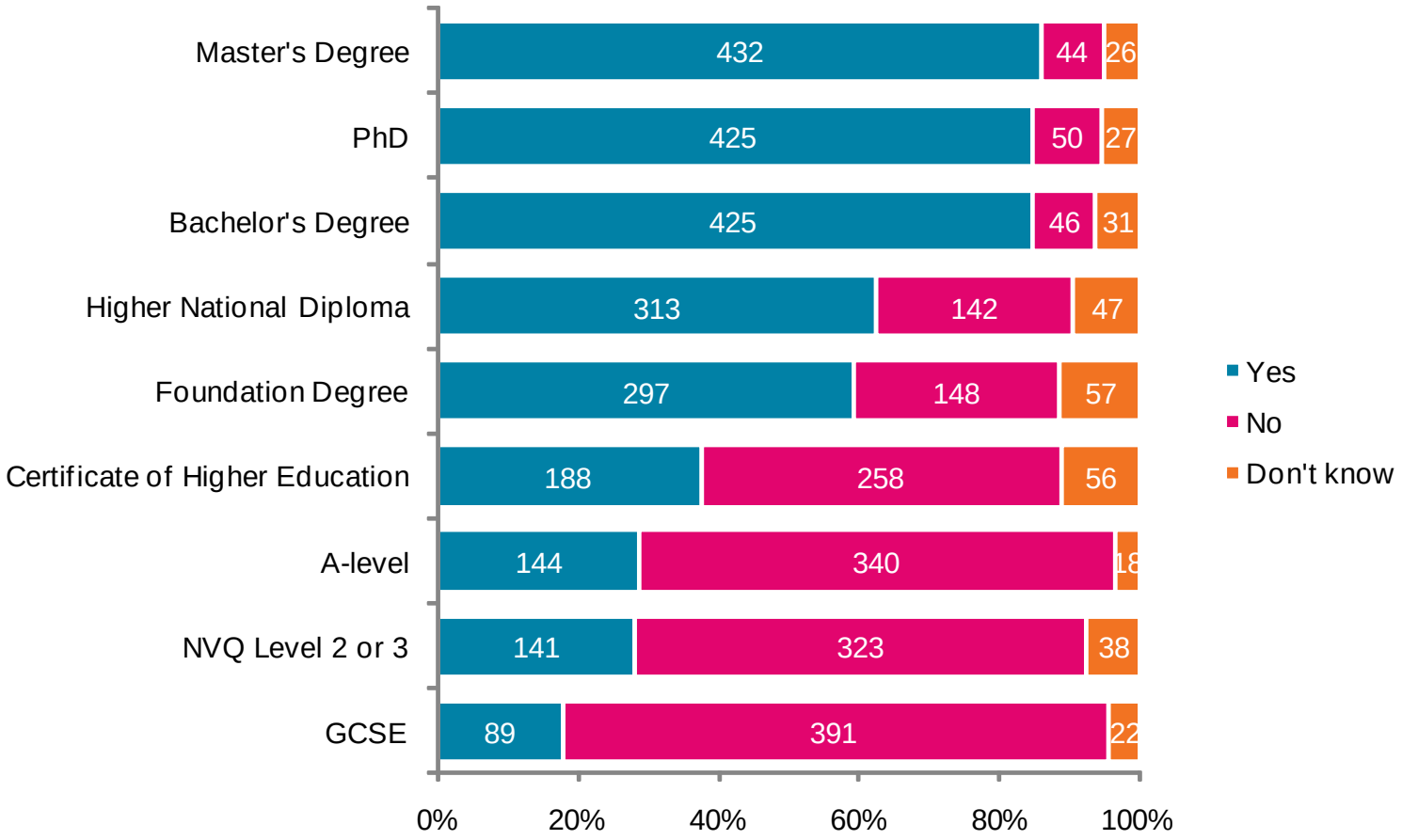
> Postgraduate: 353,430 UK students

> International: 368,970 UG and PG

> There were 451,200 mature UG *entrants* in 2008/9, 69% studying on a part time basis

> And we know there are around 178,000 students studying HE in FE

Remind me, what is a graduate?



Definitions can be problematic

> Graduate qualifications are always higher level qualifications but higher level qualifications are not always graduate qualifications!

> e.g. Level 7 fellowship in music performance on the QCF is a higher qualification than a Bachelor degree

> Is it the qualification or experience of higher level learning that matters, or both?

> Perhaps no surprise that employers revert to type: 78% AGR recruiters require minimum 2:1

So perceptions and definitions matter...

...because they narrow the focus of the debate:

> A Levels are getting easier (this trend started the year after you did yours)

> Too many young people are going to university (of course apprenticeships are fine – just not for my children)

> We need to improve the employability skills of graduates

Where are the blockages?

Two types:

> Some individuals do not enter or emerge from the pipeline

> Some employers do not get what they want from the pipeline

Individuals

> Gove: *'rich, thick kids do better than poor, clever children before they go to school'*

> HEFCE: 1/5 of the poorest, 3/5 of the richest progress to HE

> Lack of aspiration and/or awareness can trump attainment (see applications to selective universities, independents vs. comps)

> Around 4% of Advanced Apprentices progress to HE

Employers

> Employability skills: huge amount of research and no two lists look the same

> Need to go beyond the shopping list approach - learning to learn important

> The STEM delusion - do not conflate with numeracy or use to bash media studies!

> *The Fuse* highlighted importance of CDIT

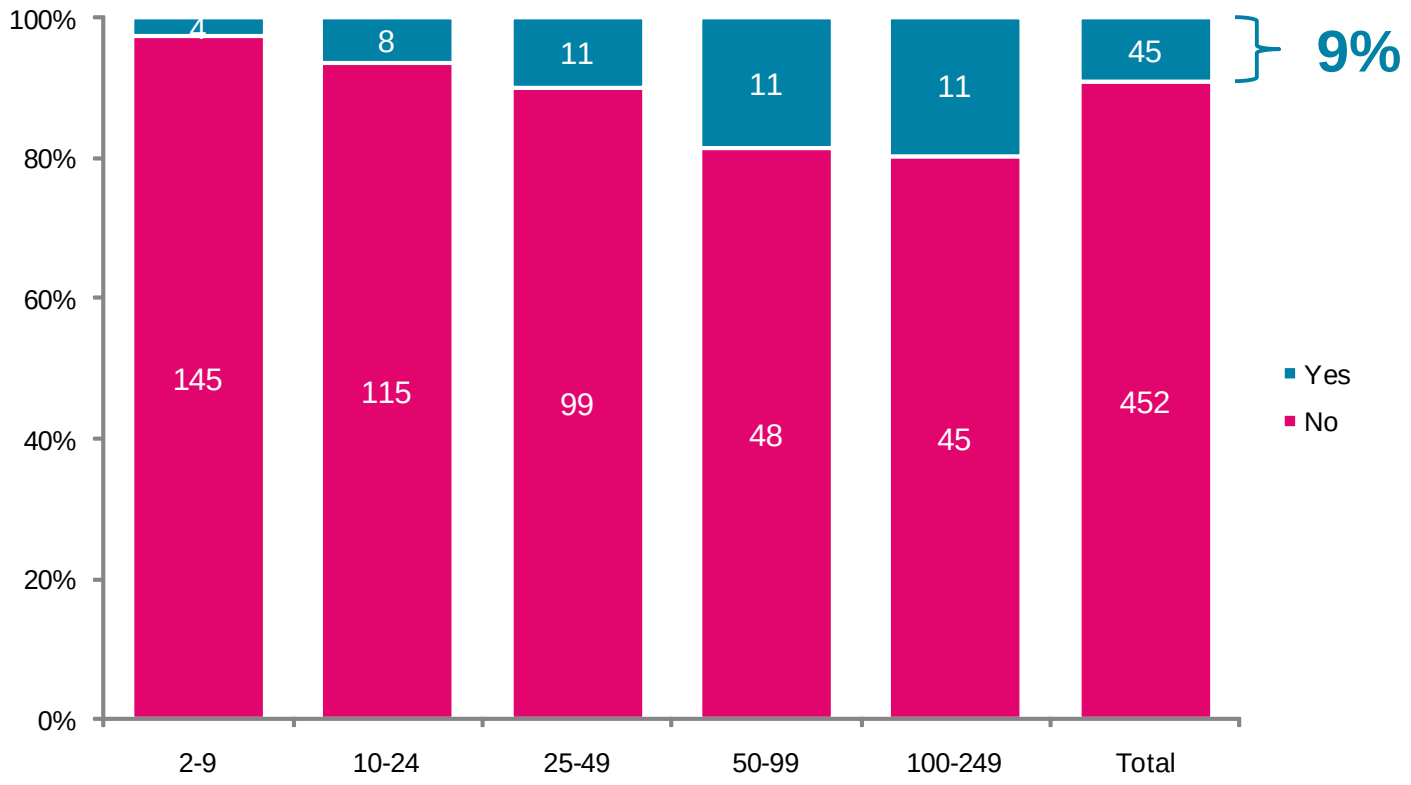
> Regulation can block pipeline of international talent

Employers

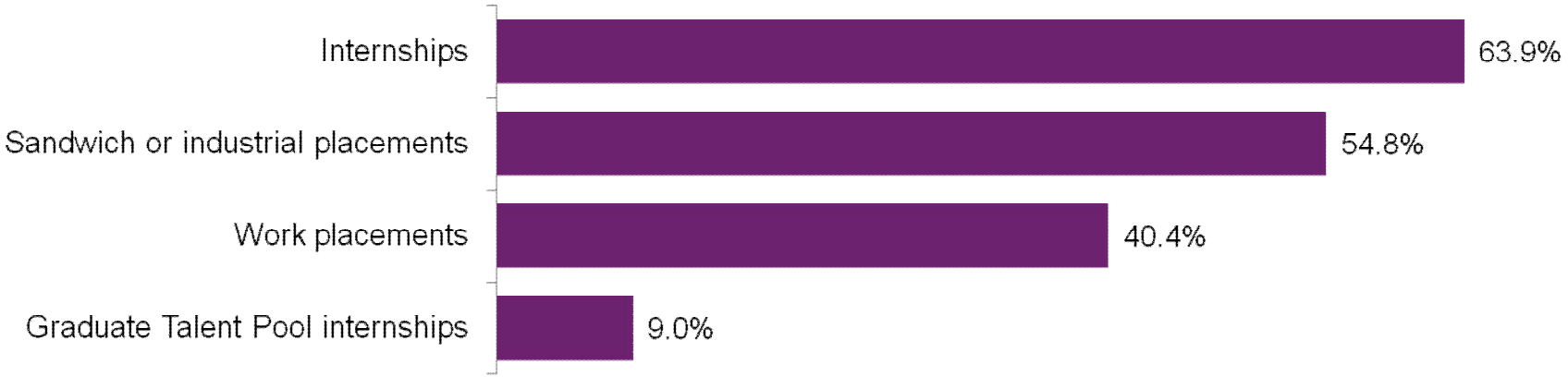
> Breaking news: all employers are different, strategy cuts across sector and geography

> Important not to view pipeline entirely through lens of large graduate recruiters

Recruitment of placement students and interns by SMEs



Recruitment of placement students and interns by AGR members



How might the pipeline change in the post-Browne world?

‘I’m afraid to tell you there is no money left’

> Burden of funding shifted from taxpayer to individual (and employer)

> Tuition fees of up to 9k per year

> Graduates will pay more, competing assessments of impact on participation

> £150 million National Scholarships Programme roughly equivalent to Aimhigher budget for two years (to replace or supplement?)

CFE

A consumer revolution?

> Emergence of a seller-buyer relationship that will drive up standards?

> In theory this would also benefit graduate recruiters

> But its a strange sort of market – "*pay 9k for what was 3k to receive the same service*"

> All at a time when graduate unemployment is at 17 year high (8.9%) and graduate salaries remain static

Whose priority?

> Public funding withdrawn from non-priority subjects
> Government plays a greater role in determining what is funded
> But can you centrally plan a market based system?
> The key will be where government gets its advice - invest in adaptive capacity of institutions

Thank you

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