



What Happens Next?

*A Report on the First Destinations of
2013 Disabled Graduates*

AGCAS Disability Task Group

June 2015

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A Report on the First Destinations of 2013 Disabled Graduates

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Executive summary

The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey undertaken every year by UK higher education (HE) institutions continues to provide the most valuable indicator of the worth of a degree. The survey collects data from graduates approximately six months on from completion of their studies and focuses on their current activities.

Since 2002, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) has funded research, undertaken by the Disability Task Group (DTG), into the career destinations of disabled graduates. This research culminates in the annual *What Happens Next?* report.

Over the years the report has been produced it has provided real evidence of the effect of a disability on a graduate's prospects in the labour market. For the most part, the reports have indicated that disabled graduates generally fare better than had been assumed previous to the report's inception. However, what has also been made clear is that certain groups of disabled graduates fare better or worse than others and, in some cases, the disparities have been quite marked.

Slight changes to how the data collected from graduates by the DLHE survey is categorised were introduced in 2011. This has afforded the opportunity for the DTG to consult with the HE careers guidance community about the future of the report. The consultation highlighted the usefulness of the report to the sector, and this year's report presents a new focus on destinations details for disabled graduates.

The 2013 report not only answers questions about the destinations of disabled graduates, but also provides answers to questions about how they found out about their jobs, reasons they had for taking them, and how well they felt their university experience prepared them for employment, further study or self-employment

Key findings from 2013

- Disabled graduates continue to have lower rates of employment and higher rates of unemployment than their non-disabled peers, with graduates with social communication/Autistic Spectrum Disorders having the highest unemployment rates of all disability types. Interestingly, however, this group have the highest rates of part-time work and full-time study in comparison with their disabled peers.
- A notable exception is graduates with specific learning disabilities whose full-time employment rates exceed those of disabled graduates overall, and almost match those of non-disabled graduates.
- The most popular way that disabled graduates found out about their jobs was through employer websites; however, personal contacts proved more useful for graduates with mental health conditions, specific learning difficulties and social communication/Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Fewer disabled graduates than non-disabled graduates found their jobs through already having worked for their employer in some capacity; however, of the disabled group, graduates who were deaf or with hearing loss tended to find their jobs this way more often.
- The most important reason for taking a job across both overall disabled and non-disabled graduate groups was connected with a need to earn money and pay off debts.

- More non-disabled than disabled graduates felt their courses and extracurricular activities prepared them well for employment or further study; the opposite being true when it came to preparation for self-employment.

1. Background and introduction

1.1 Context

In the academic year 2012/2013, approximately six months after completing their first degree courses, graduates were contacted by their respective universities to complete the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, the results of which are published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

This report is based on analysis of data from the 427,870 leavers that responded to the survey; of this number, 11.6% (44,550) identified themselves, during the period of their studies, as having either a disability or learning difficulty. What happened to these disabled graduates? How successful were they in gaining employment? How did the methods used to find work compare to those of their non-disabled peers? This report seeks to answer these questions and to challenge the widely established views on the opportunities available to disabled graduates.

1.2 Higher education careers services and disability

In recent years widening participation activities have occupied the agenda of most UK HE institutions. University careers services have been at the forefront of these activities in recognising the additional needs of students traditionally seen as disadvantaged within the labour market (by virtue of factors relating to age, ethnicity, gender and disability). Specialist legislation in many of these areas, including the Equality Act 2010, has put further pressure on services to demonstrate commitment to support activities. This report is of significant value to services wishing to gain a greater understanding of the challenges facing their disabled students.

1.3 AGCAS Disability Task Group

The AGCAS Disability Task Group (DTG) helps to shape the careers support available to students in HE through resource development, training delivery and sharing of good practice.

This is the thirteenth year the *What Happens Next?* report has been produced. It is now written by members of the DTG. AGCAS provided the funding to obtain the DLHE survey data from HESA.

1.4 Impact of the report

Historically, this report has attracted significant interest from parties committed to supporting disabled graduates. The report provided, for the first time, evidence of the impact of disability on a graduate's employment prospects. The value of a degree in assisting disabled individuals to secure suitable employment was then further recognised by the publication of *Getting in, Staying in and Getting on: Disability Employment Support Fit for the Future (A Review to Government)* by Liz Sayce in 2011, which indicated far less favourable employment experiences for disabled groups generally.

1.5 Evolution of this report

The *What Happens Next?* report has gone through several manifestations since its inception in 2003. Originally working with data from what was then the *First Destination* survey, the

report each year built upon the number of comparisons it made between the destinations of disabled and non-disabled graduates.

The ten year anniversary of the report was marked with a report called *What Happens Next? Ten Years On*. The publication summarised trends in graduate destinations across a period of time which included the economic downturn of 2008.

This milestone was also viewed as an opportunity to review the content and structure of the report moving forward, particularly in light of changes to the DLHE survey which related to how employment outcomes and disability types are classified. These changes mean that this report has been unable to compare data with previous years' reports.

After the production of the anniversary report, two surveys were conducted by the DTG, one with AGCAS members and one with external respondents. Overall, the responses showed that the report was useful and should be continued.

1.6 What this report measures

The aim of the report is to see how the destinations of disabled and non-disabled graduates compare, and whether these groups entered comparable employment. Features particular to the experience of graduates with specific disabilities are highlighted. The report analyses the first destinations of those completing a first degree on a full-time basis. It does not give details of the destinations of part-time first degree graduates, postgraduates, foundation degrees or diploma qualifiers.

The *What Happens Next? Ten Years On* survey responses have helped to shape the contents of this edition of the report, which contains data on:

- destinations of disabled graduates compared to non-disabled graduates
- destinations of disabled graduates by disability
- how the graduates first found out about the job that they took
- reasons for taking the job that they took
- how well the graduates' programmes of study prepared them for employment, further study or self-employment

Due to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, HESA implements a strategy in its publications designed to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest multiple of five. The percentage figures quoted in the tables and figures throughout this text are based on accurate figures drawn from HESA's raw data.

Year-on-year comparisons of destinations data has been a useful feature of previous *What Happens Next?* reports; however, the changes in the DLHE survey, as mentioned above, have meant that a comparison between the data sets in this report and the data sets in the previous year's report cannot be made. Despite this, some interesting trends have emerged within the data which should provide a strong basis for making such comparisons in future years.

1.7 Terminology

Within this report the term 'disabled graduates' describes those graduates who identified themselves as having a disability/learning difficulty during the period of their studies. The

term 'non-disabled graduates' refers to the cohort of graduates in the survey who did not declare themselves to have a disability of any kind.

The disability type categories used by HESA have been modified in the most recent version of the DLHE survey. Table 1 shows the HESA categories which graduates selected from to best describe their disability. The AGCAS DTG have chosen to refer to the DLHE disability type categories by the terminology shown in column 2 of the table, both for reasons of brevity and to present the categories using terminology preferred by the AGCAS DTG.

Table 1: Disability type category headings

HESA disability categories	<i>What Happens Next? 2015</i> category headings
Blind or serious visual impairment	Blind/visual condition
Deaf or serious hearing impairment	Deaf/hearing loss
Physical impairment or mobility issues	Physical/mobility issues
Mental health conditions	Mental health conditions
Long-standing illness or health condition	Long-standing illness or health condition
Two or more conditions	Two or more conditions
Specific learning difficulty	SpLD
Social communication/Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Social/ASD
Another disability, impairment or medical condition	Other disability or condition
Personal care support	Personal care support

The 2012/13 DLHE survey is referred to as '2013' in the body of the text. In the headings the full academic year is stated.

1.8 First degree 2012/2013 DLHE respondents

- Total number of first degree, full-time mode of study leavers responding to DLHE survey: 427,870.
- Total number of non-disabled graduates: 383,320.
- Total number of disabled graduates: 44,550.
- The percentage of disabled graduates in 2013 from the total of all graduates with known classification: 11.6%.

2. Destinations of disabled graduates

2.1 Destinations findings

This section looks at the destinations of first degree graduates responding to the 2013 survey across both full and part-time work and study (and combinations of both), impending job starts, unemployment and 'other' destinations. Comparisons are made between destination types of disabled and non-disabled graduates, with reference made to destinations by type of disability.

Key findings

- More non-disabled graduates were in full-time work than disabled graduates overall.
- Fewer non-disabled graduates were unemployed than disabled graduates overall.
- Of the disabled graduates, the percentage of graduates with a SpLD most closely matched the findings for non-disabled graduates, exceeding the total of disabled graduates in full-time work.
- Graduates with social/ASD had the lowest rate of full-time employment and the highest rate of unemployment. More positively, however, this group had the highest rates of part-time work and full-time study when compared with graduates with all other disability types.

Table 2: Destinations of non-disabled and disabled graduates

Activity	No known disability	%	Disabled	%
Full-time work	222,305	58.0%	22,465	50.4%
Part-time work	46,845	12.2%	6,420	14.4%
Primarily in work and also studying	14,120	3.7%	1,465	3.3%
Primarily studying and also in work	12,055	3.1%	1,505	3.4%
Full-time study	44,065	11.5%	5,450	12.2%
Part-time study	4,575	1.2%	850	1.9%
Due to start work	2,865	0.7%	385	0.9%
Unemployed	20,670	5.4%	3,545	8.0%
Other	15,815	4.1%	2,465	5.5%
Total	383,320	100.0%	44,550	100.0%

Overall, 89.2% of non-disabled graduates and 86.5% of disabled graduates were engaged in some sort of activity, whether that was work or study.

Figure 1

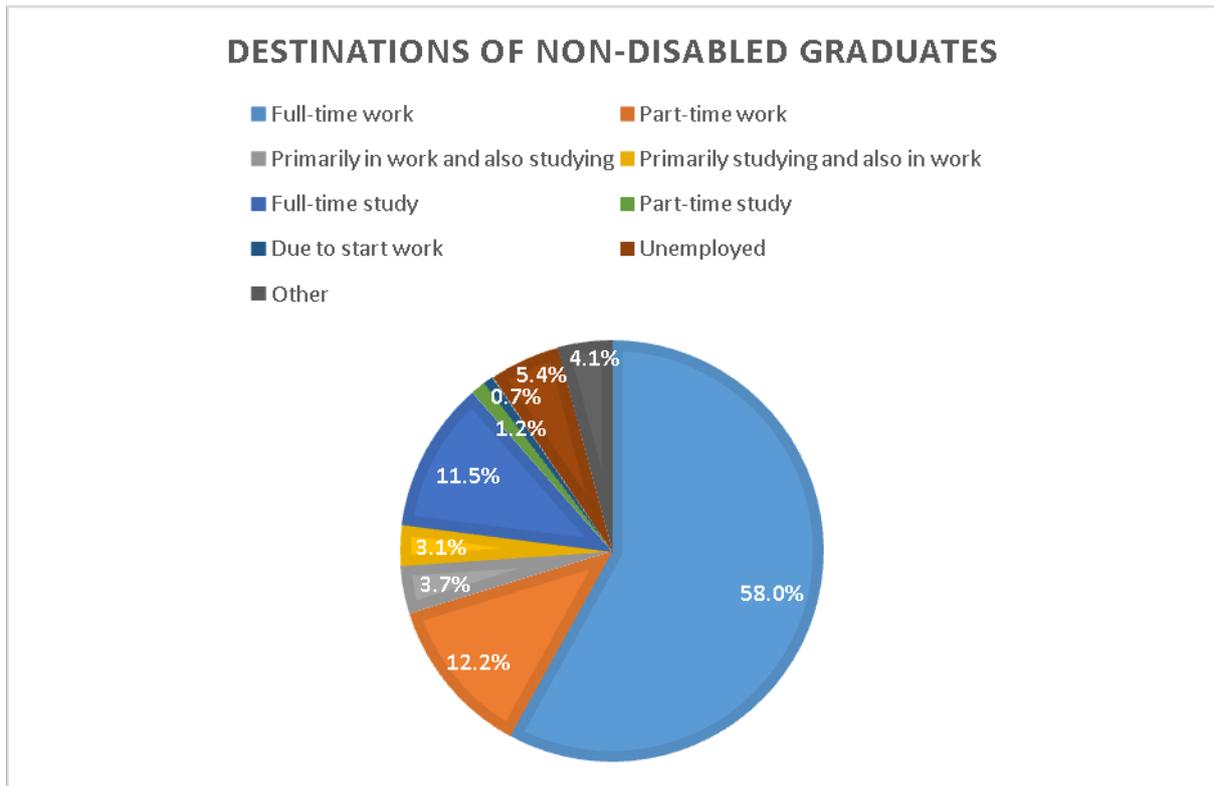
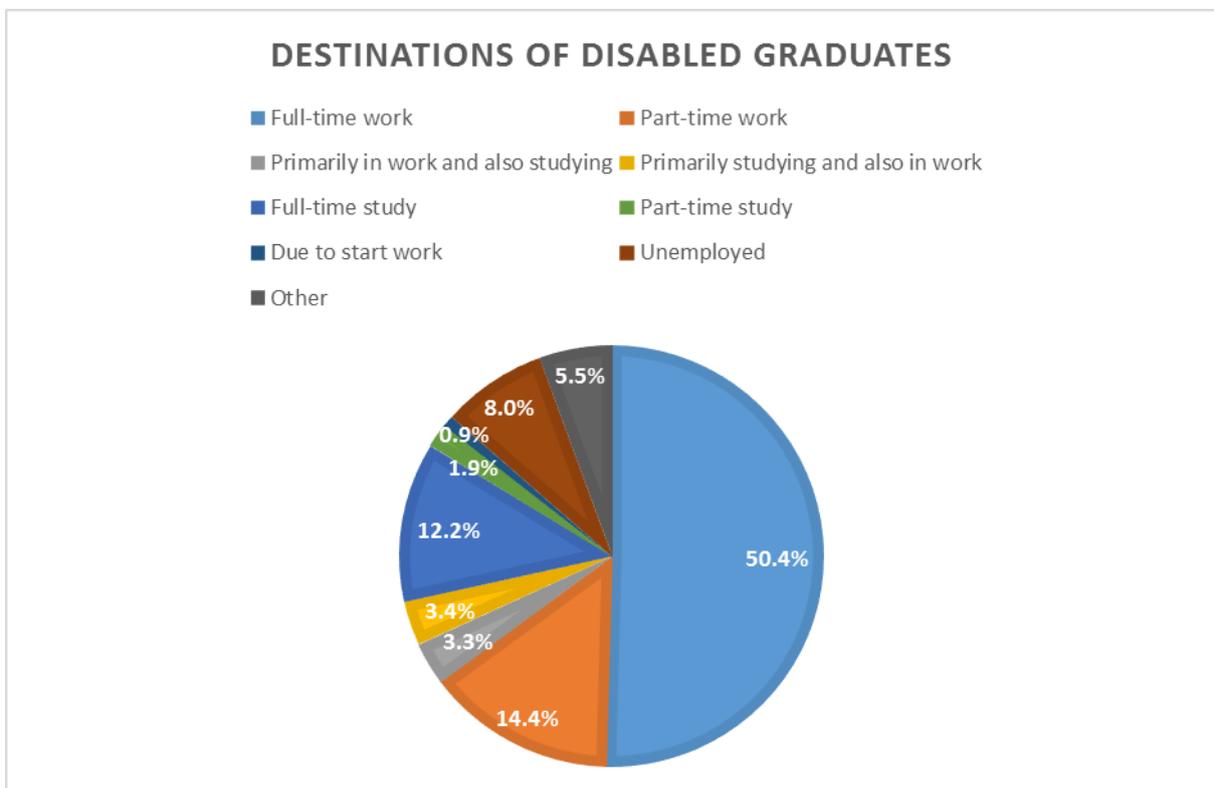


Figure 2



When considering Table 1, Figure 1 and Figure 2, the most interesting findings are:

- The most significant difference between non-disabled graduates and disabled graduates is the percentage in 'full-time work', with 58.0% of non-disabled graduates and 50.5% of disabled graduates selecting this destination, a difference of 7.5%.
- Positively for disabled graduates, percentages are higher for 'part-time work' (14.4% compared with 12.2% of non-disabled graduates), 'primarily studying and also in work' (3.4% compared with 3.1%), 'full-time study' (12.2% compared with 11.5%) and 'part-time study' (1.9% compared with 1.2%).
- When considering unemployment, 8% of disabled graduates selected 'unemployed' as their destination status compared with 5.4% of non-disabled graduates.

2.2 Destinations of disabled graduates by activity

The different types of destination are now described in more detail with reference to disability by type. Individual charts for destinations by disability type can be found in Appendix 1.

Full-time work

- The highest percentage is for graduates with a SpLD (55.8%: Appendix A, Figure A7), and lowest for graduates with a social/ASD (30.1%: Appendix A, Figure A8) – a difference of 25.7%.
- The SpLD percentage (55.8%) is higher than the overall percentage for disabled graduates (50.4%), and closer to the non-disabled graduate percentage of 58%.
- The next highest percentage is for graduates with a long-standing illness or health condition (51.6%: Appendix A, Figure A5) - again, higher than the overall percentage for disabled graduates (50.4%). Also very slightly higher than the overall percentage for disabled graduates in full-time work is those who were deaf or with hearing loss (50.5%: Appendix A, Figure A2).

Part-time work

- In terms of part-time work, percentages for all separate disability types are mostly equal or close to the overall average for disabled graduates (14.4%), and all higher than the percentage for non-disabled graduates (12.2%: all Figures in Appendix A).
- The most notable exceptions for part-time work, having slightly higher percentages than all disabled graduates, are graduates with:
 - physical/mobility issues: 15.2% (Appendix A, Figure A3)
 - mental health condition: 15.6% (Appendix A, Figure A4)
 - blind/visual conditions: 15.8% (Appendix A, Figure A1)
 - social/ASD: 17.7% (Appendix A, Figure A8)

This is the most significant difference with the overall percentage for disabled graduates.

Full-time study

- The difference between disabled graduates and non-disabled graduates is smaller with percentages at 12.2% and 11.5% respectively.
- The most significant comparison can be made with graduates who are blind or with visual conditions (16.1%: Appendix A, Figure A1) and social/ASD (19.9%: Appendix A, Figure A8).

Part-time study

- The most significant finding is the difference between both groups of overall percentages and graduates with two or more conditions (6.1%: Appendix A, Figure A6) who chose this option significantly more than both disabled graduates: 1.9% and non-disabled graduates 1.2%.

Unemployed

- There were 2.6% more disabled graduates unemployed compared with non-disabled graduates (8.0% and 5.4% respectively).
- The most significant difference is for graduates with social/ASD, with 21.5% being unemployed (Appendix A, Figure A8). This is a major difference when looking at comparisons with all other conditions and with both overall groups of graduates.

3. How did you first find out about this job?

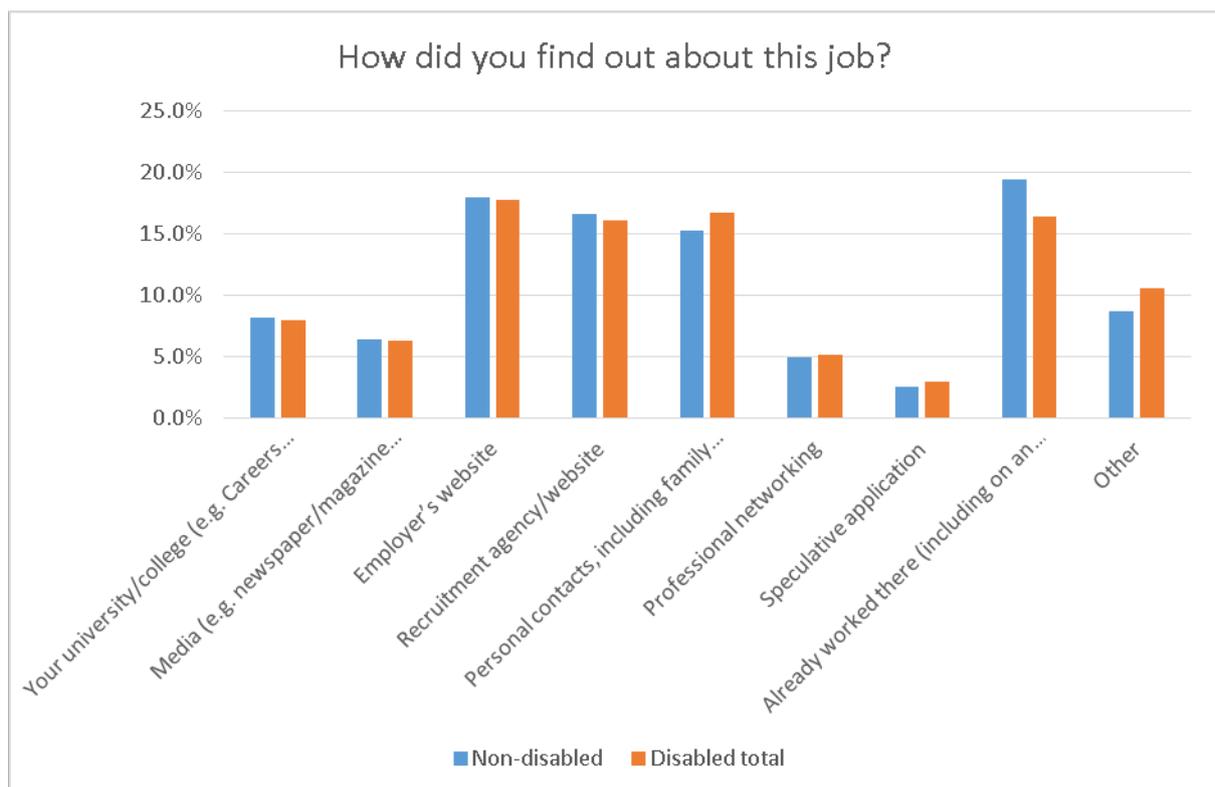
As the DLHE categories associated with this question changed slightly with the 2011 DLHE survey, no comparisons with previous years can be made in this year's report.

The section looks at the different ways in which first degree graduates initially found out about the job they were in on the survey date.

Key findings

- The most popular way that disabled graduates found out about their jobs was through employer websites; however, personal contacts proved more useful for graduates with certain conditions such as social/ASD.
- Fewer disabled graduates overall found their job through having already worked for the employer than non-disabled graduates; however, this was a popular choice for graduates with certain conditions, such as deaf/hearing loss.
- Overall responses to questions in this section indicate that more non-disabled graduates found their jobs having already worked for the employer than disabled graduates.

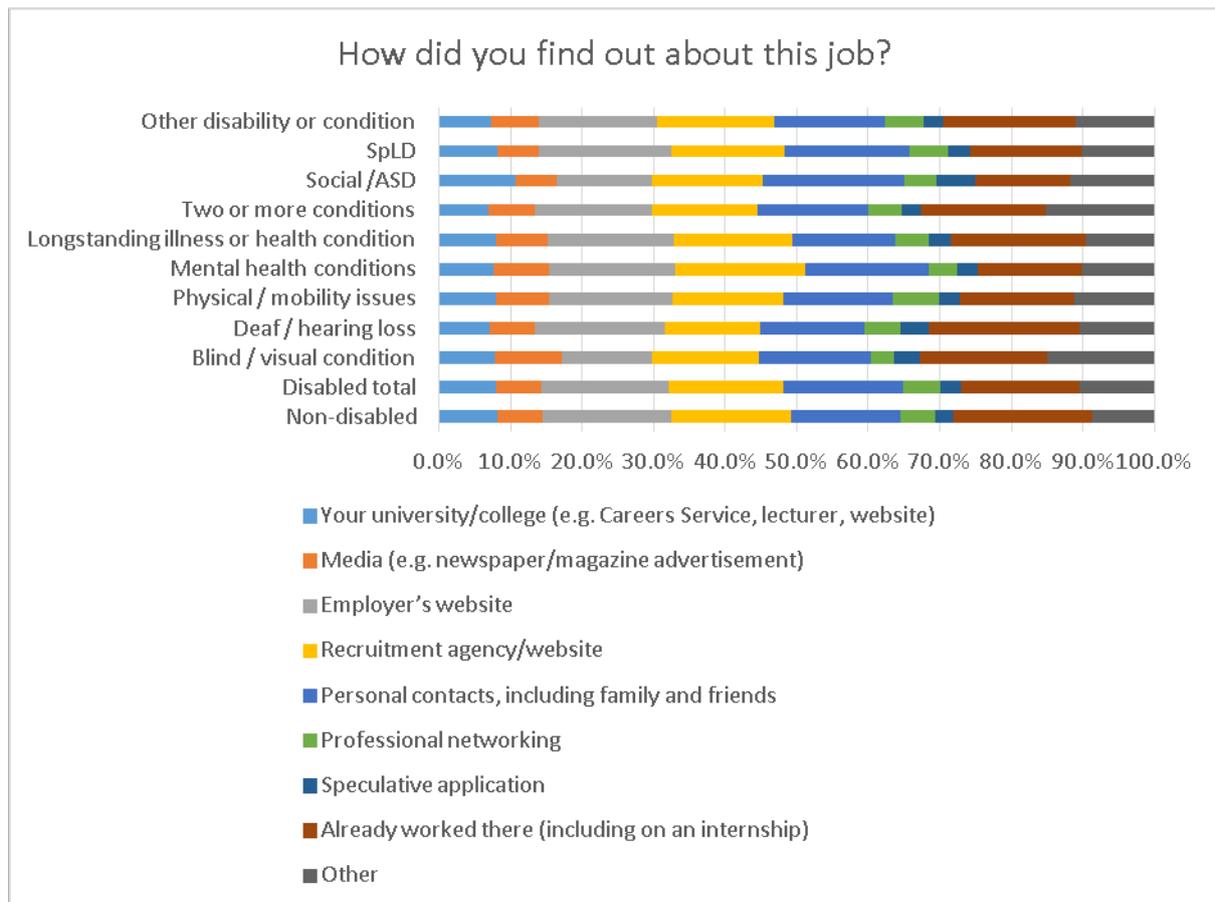
Figure 3



For the question 'How did you first find out about the job?', the most significant findings were:

- The most popular way for non-disabled graduates was 'Already worked there (including on an internship)' at 19.4%. The percentage for disabled graduates choosing this method was lower at 16.4%, and this group's overall preferred method was 'Employer's website' at 17.8% and then 'Through personal contacts (family and friends)' at 16.7%.

Figure 4



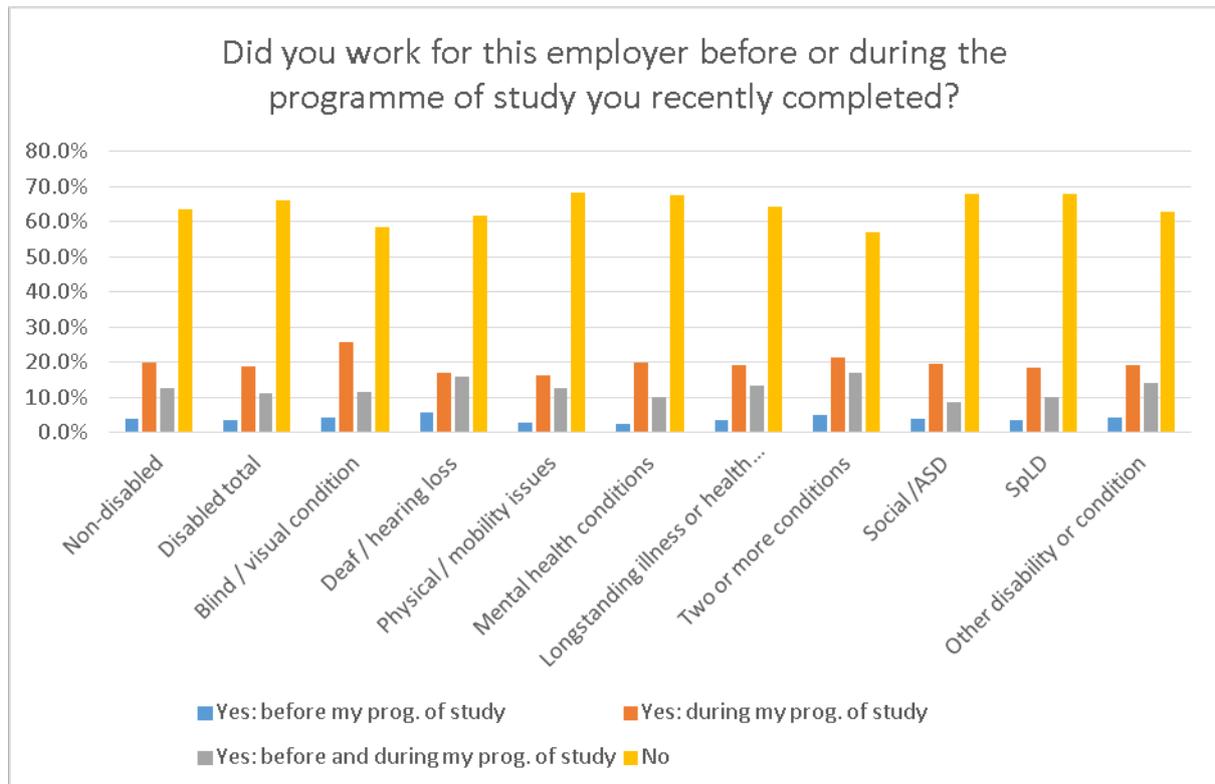
- When looking at this question by disability type, 'Already worked there (including on an internship)' was also a popular choice for graduates who identified themselves as:
 - blind or with visual conditions (17.7%)
 - with other disabilities/conditions (18.5%)
 - with a long-standing illness or health condition (19%)
 - deaf or with hearing loss (21.9%)

These percentages are all significantly higher than the overall percentage for disabled graduates (16.4%).

- Graduates with mental health conditions (17.2%), SpLD (17.5%) and social/ASD (19.8%) stated they first found out about the job through 'Personal contacts (family and friends)'. This method was the second most popular method for disabled graduates, and percentages for these disability types are all higher than the overall percentage for disabled graduates (16.7%).

3.1 Did you work for this employer before or during the programme of study you recently completed?

Figure 5



The findings for this question correlate with findings for 'How did you first find out about the job?' and 'Reasons for taking the job' (see Section 4) and suggest that slightly more non-disabled graduates than disabled graduates were already working for, or had previously worked for, the employer their job was based with.

- Fewer disabled graduates than non-disabled graduates stated that they had worked for the employer 'during' (18.9%) or 'before and during' (11.3%) their programme of study. In comparison, the percentages for non-disabled graduates were 19.8% and 12.8% respectively.
- This finding is mirrored, albeit to different degrees, in other areas of this report in the findings for: 'How did you first find out about the job: Already worked there' – non-disabled graduates 19.4%; disabled graduates 16.4%.

4. Reasons for taking the job

As with the previous section, the slight changes in DLHE categories related to this question has meant that no direct comparisons can be made with previous years' reports.

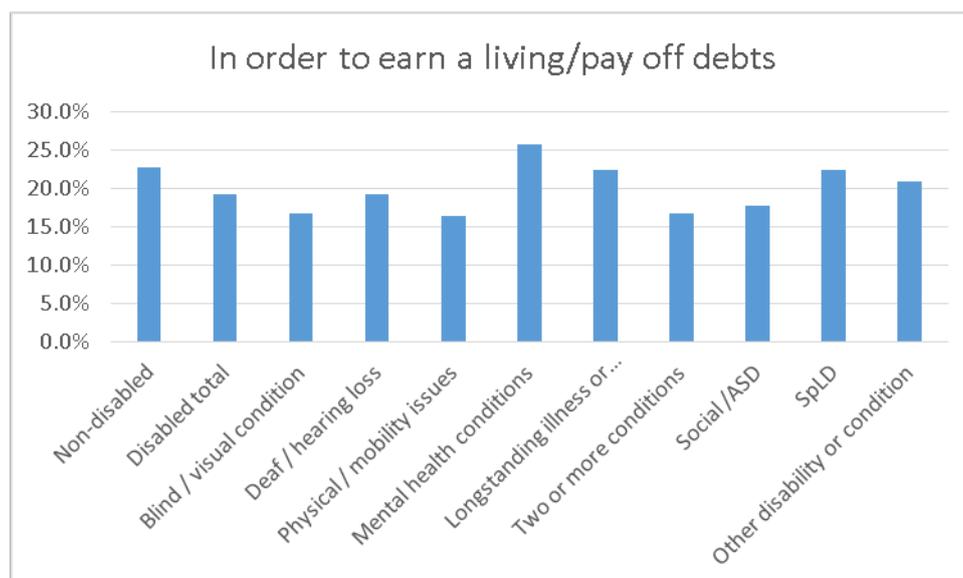
Graduates were able to select more than one reason for taking their job. This should be considered when viewing the charts in this section as it could be concluded that some aspects had more influence on decisions than others, or that several factors were taken into consideration when choosing a job.

It is worth noting in this section that one graduate had selected 'Personal care support' in the disability section, however had not provided any responses to 'reasons for taking the job'. As such, this category has been removed from the analysis.

Key findings

- 'To earn a living/pay off debts' was the most important reason for taking a job across both overall disabled and non-disabled graduate groups.
- Encouragingly, the least important reason for taking a job for both overall groups was 'It was the only job offer I received'.
- Graduates who were deaf or with hearing loss were the most likely group to take a job because it offered an opportunity to progress in the organisation; with graduates with physical/mobility issues being the least likely to select this reason.
- Graduates with social/ASD and mental health conditions were the most likely group to take a job as it was the only one offered; however, more positively, graduates with mental health conditions were also the most likely to take a job to see if they liked it, or to broaden their experience.
- Job location was least important for graduates with two or more conditions, while the job being well paid was least important for graduates with social/ASD.

Figure 6



- 'In order to earn a living/pay off debts' was the reason given by 19.2% of disabled graduates, compared with 22.8% of graduates with no known disability.
- The percentages for those with a mental health condition (25.8%), a long-standing illness or health condition (23.3%) and SpLD (22.4%) who stated 'In order to earn a living/pay off debts' were higher than the percentage for disabled graduates as a whole, and for graduates with mental health conditions higher than the overall for non-disabled graduates.

Figure 7



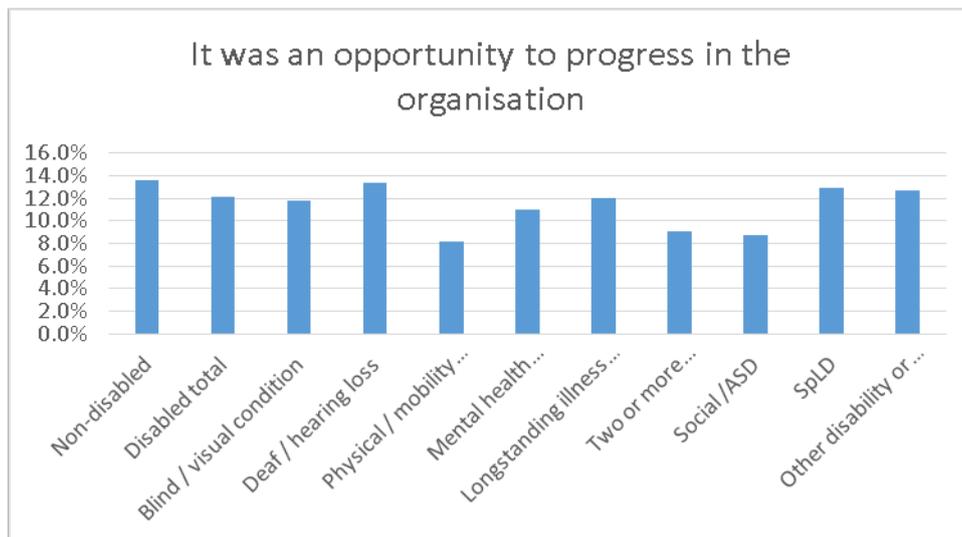
- There was some more similarity here in the comparison between non-disabled graduates and disabled graduates with 16.7% and 15.2% respectively giving 'best job offer' as the reason for taking the job.
- In terms of disabled graduates, the greatest percentage making this choice was the 16.7% of graduates who were deaf/hearing loss, matching the percentage of non-disabled graduates. Graduates with a SpLD had the next highest percentage at 16%, again higher than the disabled percentage as a whole.
- This reason seemed much less important for graduates with two or more conditions, with just 10.6% making the selection.

Figure 8



- The percentages of non-disabled graduates and total of disabled graduates are almost identical here at 8.5% and 8.3%.
- The percentages for graduates with a mental health condition (9.9%) and social/ASD (10.2%) were higher than the overall totals for non-disabled graduates and disabled graduates.
- This is the question with the lowest percentages overall for this section, the greatest being 10.2%.

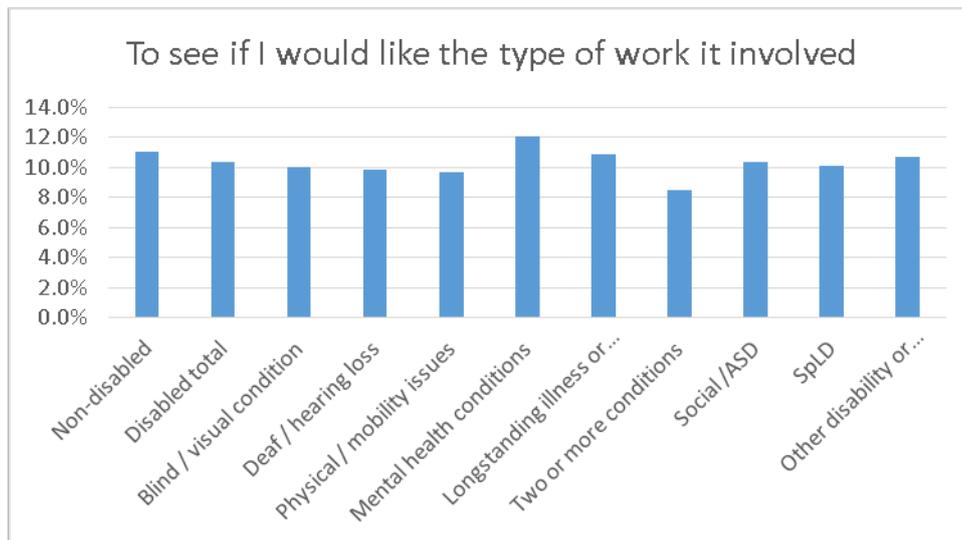
Figure 9



- Respondents with physical/mobility issues (8.2%), two or more conditions (9.1%) and social/ASD (8.7%) had significantly lower percentages than the overall averages for non-disabled graduates (13.6%) and disabled graduates (12.2%).
- The response to this question from graduates who are deaf or with hearing loss (13.4%), graduates with a SpLD (12.9%) and graduates with other disabilities

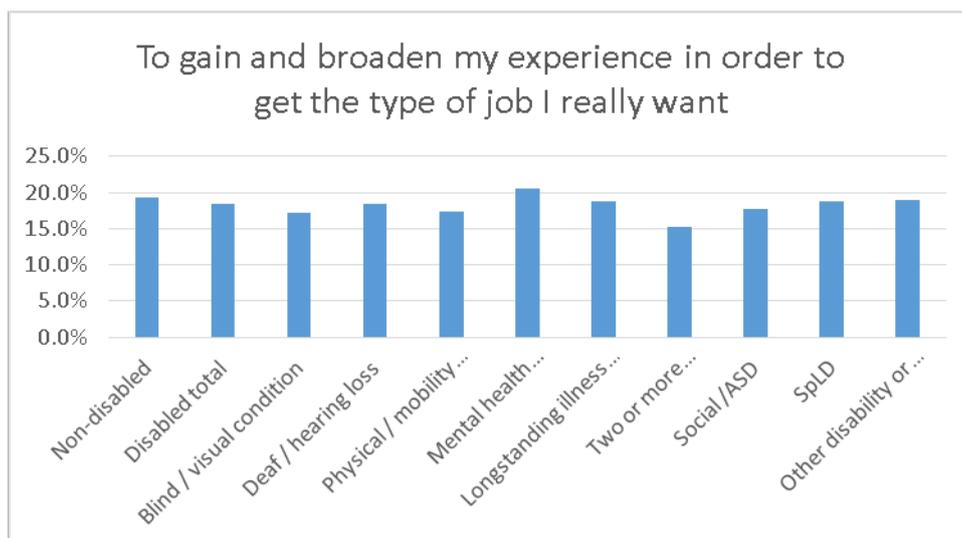
(12.7%) was much more positive and exceeded that of disabled graduates as a whole.

Figure 10



- There is a lot more parity across percentages here with 11% of non-disabled graduates selecting this answer compared with 10.3% of disabled graduates.
- The main differences are for graduates with a mental health condition who have more than both average groups at 12.1%, suggesting this reason was more important for this group; and graduates with two or more conditions (8.5%) finding it a less important reason.

Figure 11



- Again, there are not many significant differences across the range of percentages here, although the response rate is higher than for the majority of other reasons – only exceeded by 'To earn a living/pay off debts'.

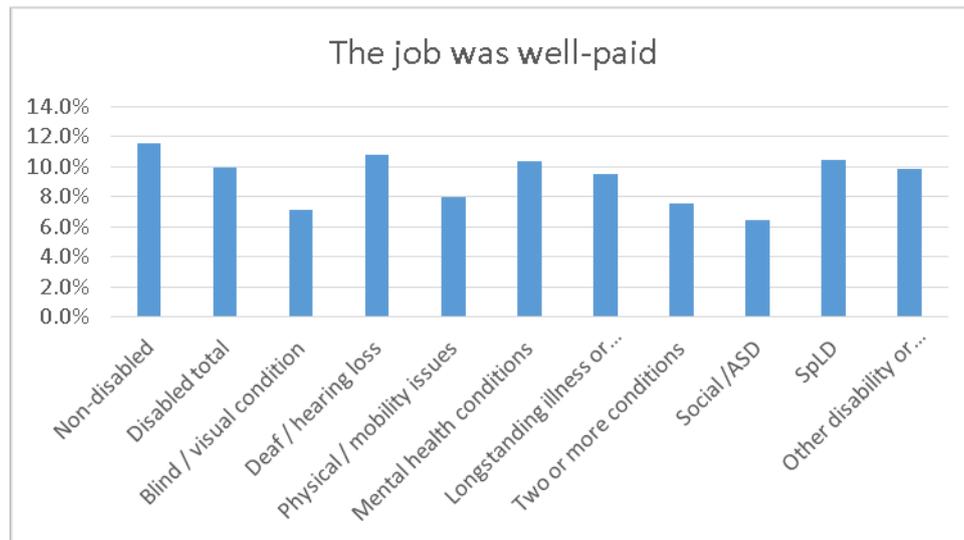
- These percentages follow the trend from Figure 10 – with more graduates with mental health conditions giving this as the reason for job choice (20.6%) than the averages for both overall groups (non-disabled graduates at 19.4% and disabled graduates at 18.5%); and graduates with two or more conditions less than the overall averages at 15.2%.

Figure 12



- The difference between overall non-disabled graduates (18.1%) and disabled graduates (16.3%) widens again slightly here.
- There are greater differences too between type of disability, with graduates with a mental health condition (18.2%) matching the non-disabled graduates group; and graduates with other disabilities (17.4%), SpLD (16.6%) and a long-standing illness or health condition (17.1%) all showing more than the overall average of disabled graduates.
- In comparison, 15% of graduates who were deaf or with hearing loss, 13.4% of graduates with physical/mobility issues, 13.4% of graduates with social/ASD and only 11.3% of graduates with two or more conditions selected this as their reason; all lower than the average percentages for both overall groups of graduates, suggesting that job location was not as important a driver for these groups.

Figure 13



- Although the overall lower percentages indicate this was a less important reason for most graduates, the trend here is similar to Figure 12.
- Again, there is more of a difference between non-disabled graduates and disabled graduates (11.6% and 9.9% respectively). Graduates who were deaf or with hearing loss (10.8%) and those with a mental health condition (10.4%), SpLD (10.4%) or other disabilities (9.8%) show more parity with the average percentage for disabled graduates as a whole.
- The percentages are lower than both overall groups for graduates with physical/mobility issues (8%), two or more conditions (7.6%), blind/visual conditions (7.1%) and social/ASD (6.5%) – these latter two being significantly lower than the overall percentage for disabled graduates (9.9%).

5. How well did your recent course and any extracurricular activities you were involved with (including placements undertaken whilst you were studying) prepare you for...

1. ...employment
2. ...further study
3. ...being self-employed/freelance or for starting up your own business?

Graduates were asked to consider how their university experience prepared them for choices beyond graduation. This question was optional and, as such, there were a number of 'unknowns' from both non-disabled (18.4%) and disabled (18.3%) graduates. The findings below therefore represent the data gathered from those who did respond to the question.

Key findings

- More non-disabled graduates felt their courses and extracurricular activities prepared them well for employment or further study than disabled graduates.
- The opposite was true when it came to preparation for self-employment, with more disabled graduates feeling they were prepared 'well' or 'very well' than non-disabled graduates. However, the majority of graduates in both overall groups were unsure whether their course or extracurricular activities had prepared them for self-employment, with greater numbers feeling more prepared for further study or employment.

Figure 14

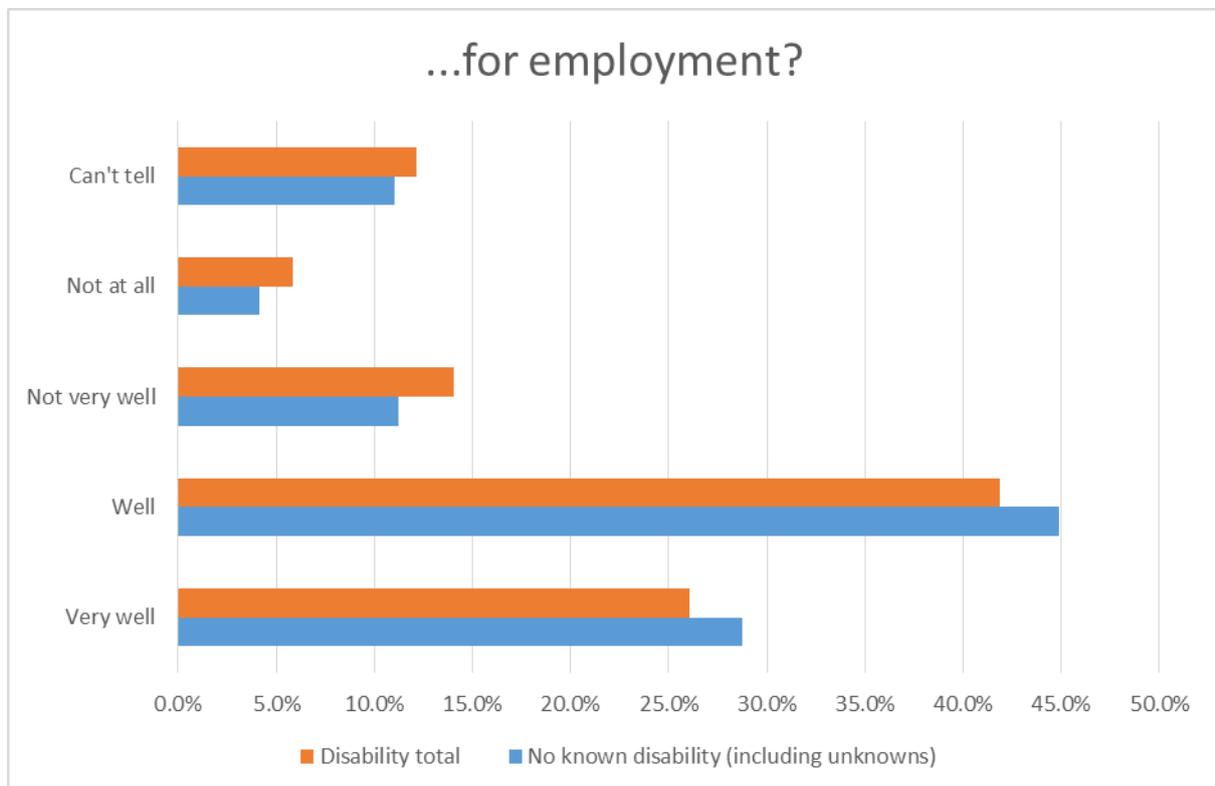


Figure 15

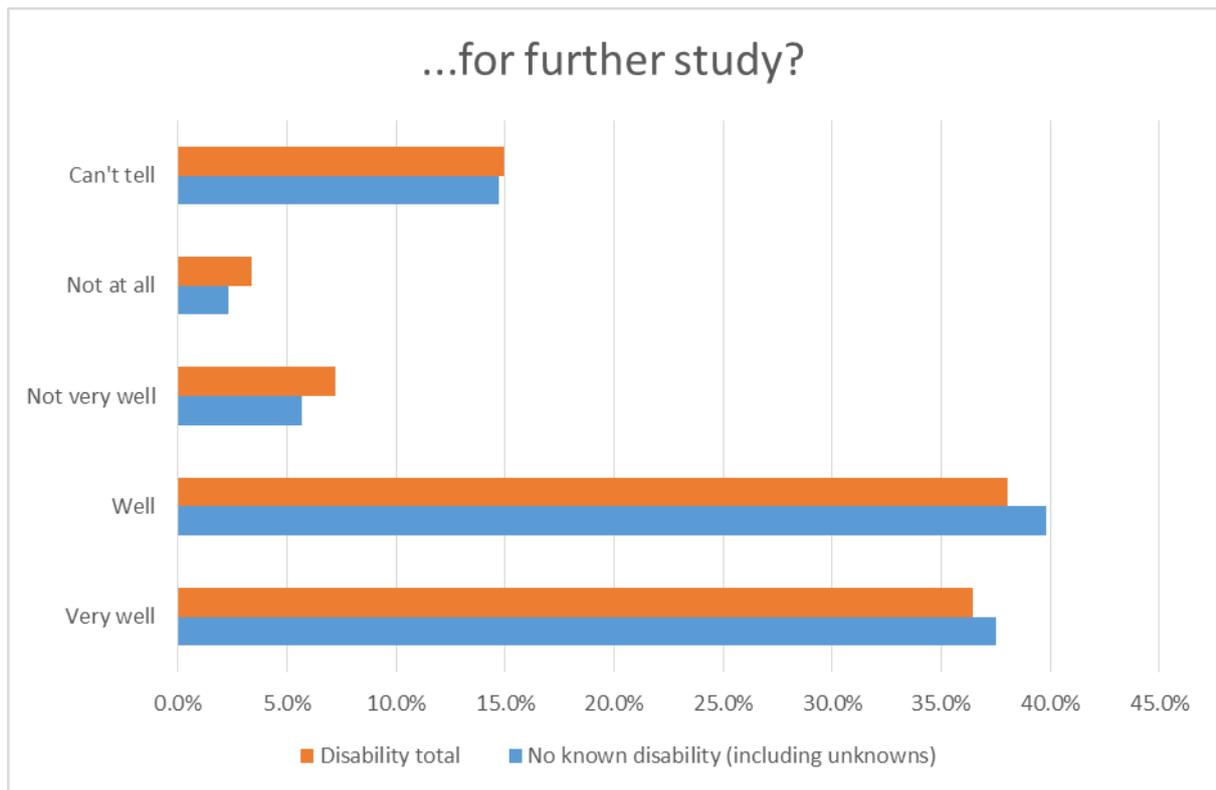
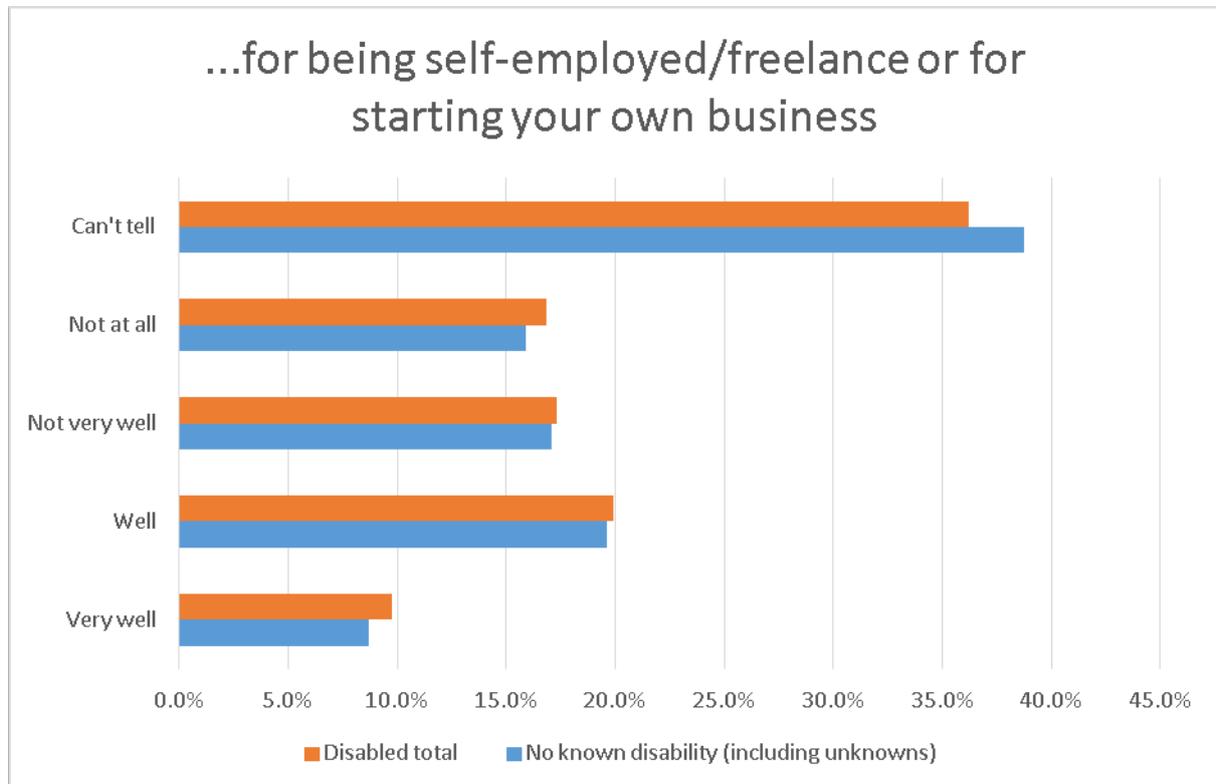


Figure 16



The total returns from both overall groups show more positive responses for preparation for employment and further study than for being self-employed/freelance or starting your own business.

However, looking at the data in more detail:

- Non-disabled graduates felt that they were prepared 'well' (44.9%) or 'very well' (28.7%) for employment, compared with disabled graduates ('well' 41.8%; 'very well' 26.1%).
- This trend was also evident when thinking about preparation for further study with 39.8% of non-disabled graduates feeling they had been prepared 'well' and 37.5% 'very well', compared with 38% and 36.4% of disabled graduates respectively.
- Although overall responses for both groups were less positive when thinking about preparation for being 'self-employed/freelance or starting a business', disabled graduates did select 'well' (19.9%) and 'very well' (9.8%), more than non-disabled graduates (19.6% and 8.7% respectively).

Conclusion

Previous editions of *What Happens Next?* have reported on differences across disabled graduate and non-disabled graduate destinations during a turbulent economic period. Overall, HESA data shows there have been increases in employment rates for all graduates recently as economic recovery has gathered pace, and the 2013 report similarly shows some positive results although, as discussed, direct comparisons with previous years cannot be made.

Some trends that do appear to be continuing are that graduates with less obvious conditions, such as SpLDs, seem to be experiencing more positive destinations. Of the more recognisable conditions, graduates who are deaf or who have hearing loss have performed best generally in terms of employment.

The additional questions asked about how graduates found their jobs, the reasons they had for taking them, and how well they felt their university experience prepared them for employment, further study or self-employment, which have been included for the first time in this report, have indicated some thought-provoking findings such as:

- Graduates with mental health conditions, SpLD or social communication/ASD were more likely to find work through their personal contacts.
- When looking at disability type, graduates who were deaf or who had hearing loss were most likely to have found their job through already having worked for their employer.
- More disabled graduates felt better prepared by their courses for self-employment than non-disabled graduates.

It will be interesting to revisit these findings in future reports to see whether they are indicators of emerging trends.

Appendix 1: Destinations of disabled graduates by disability

This appendix contains charts relating to Section 2 and illustrates the destinations of disabled graduates by disability type.

Figure A1

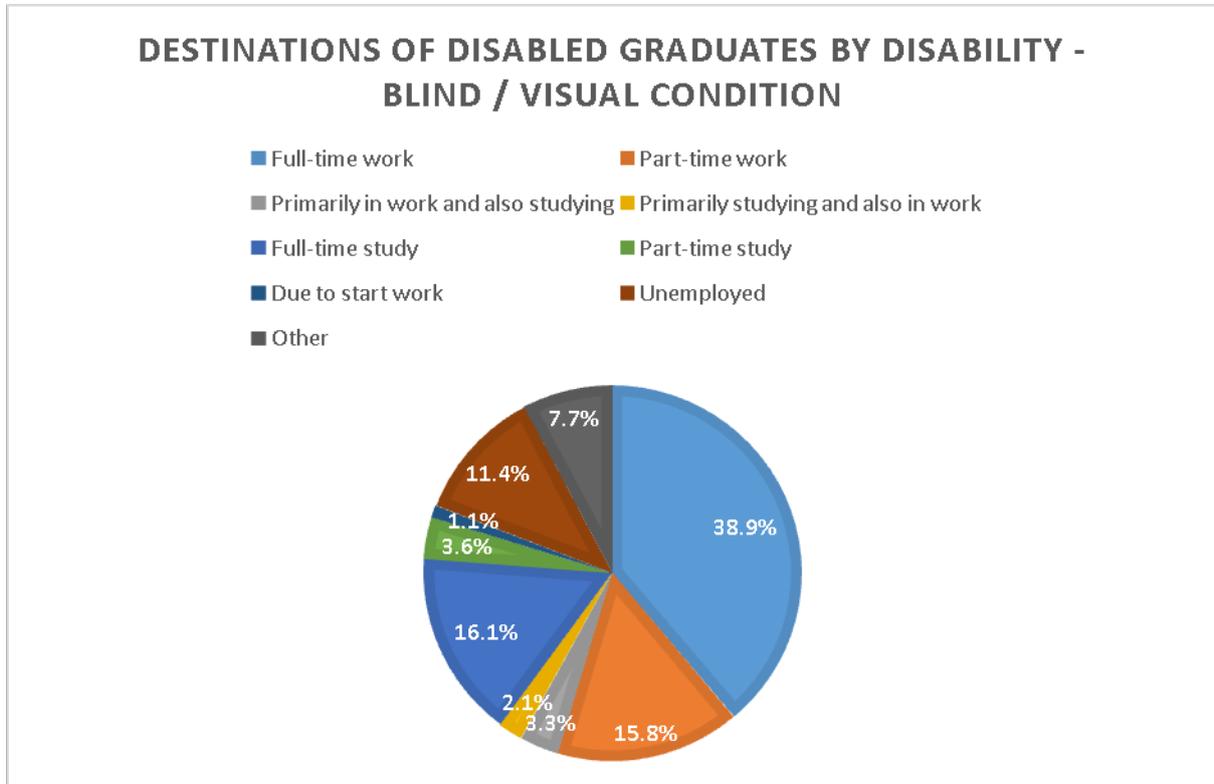


Figure A2

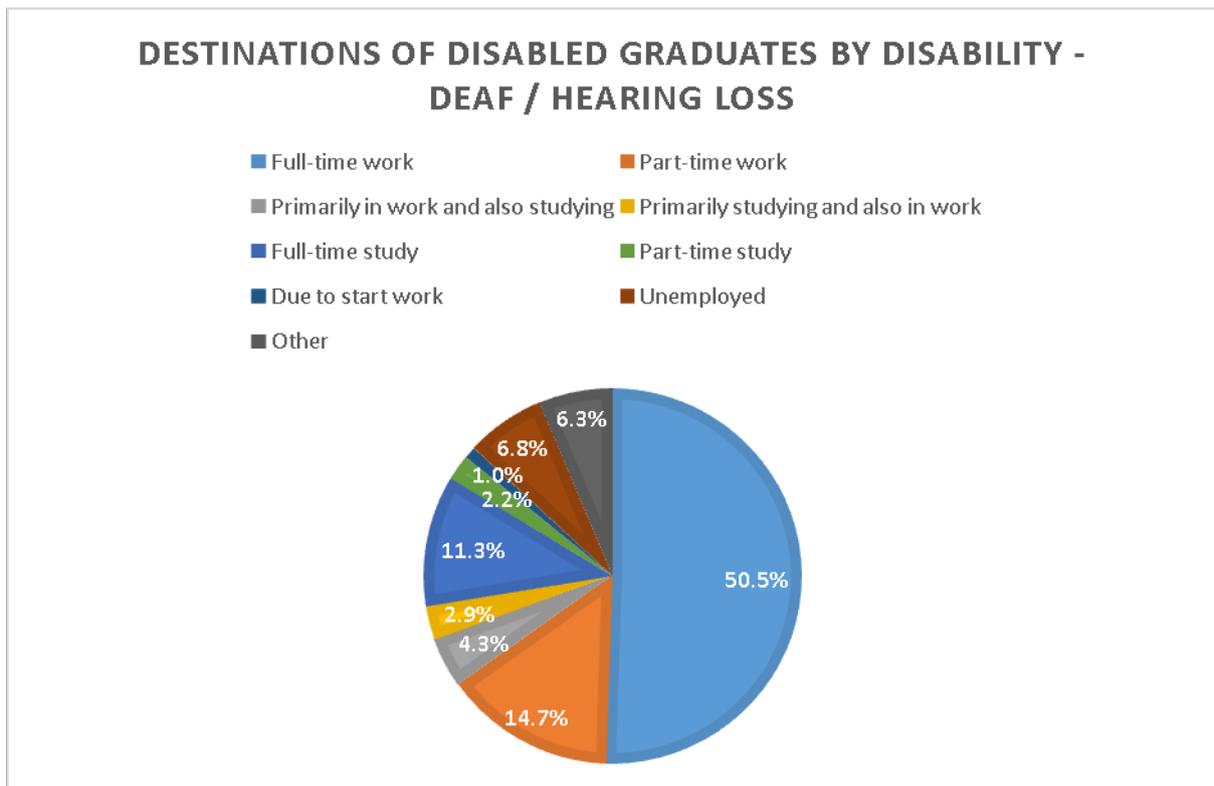


Figure A3

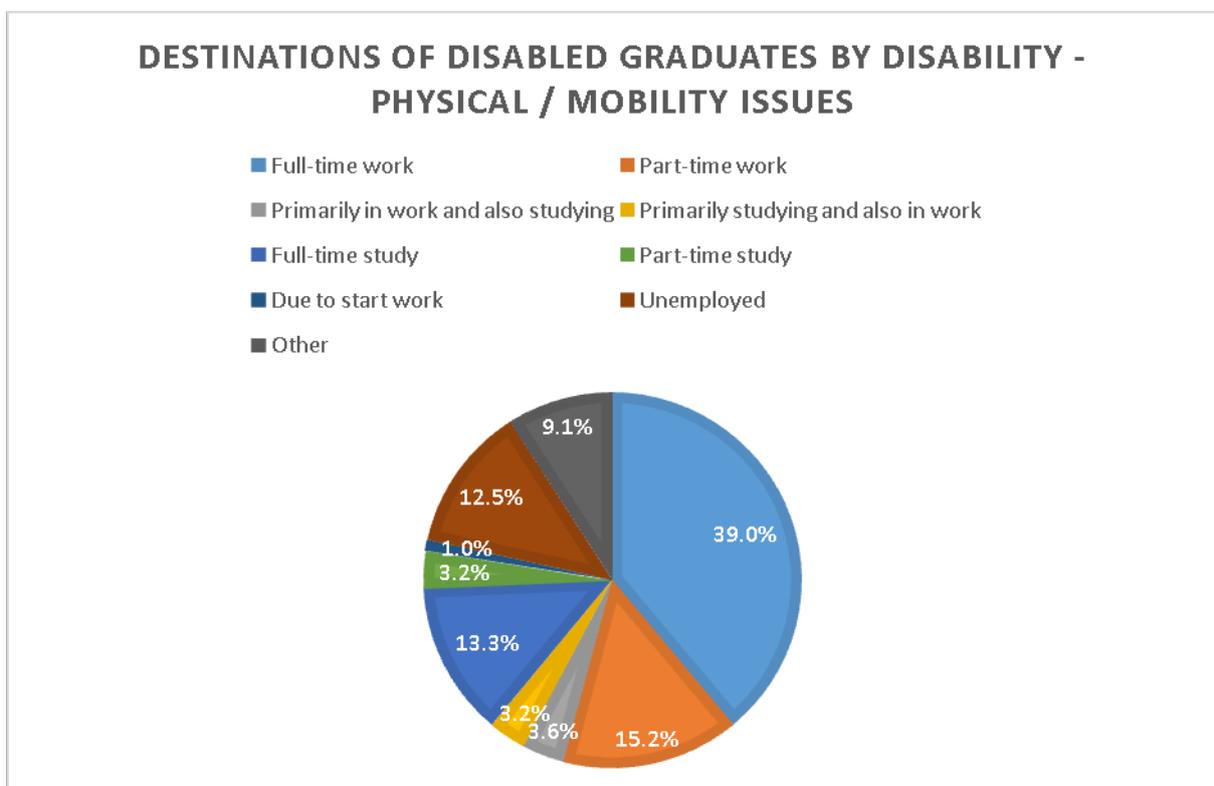


Figure A4

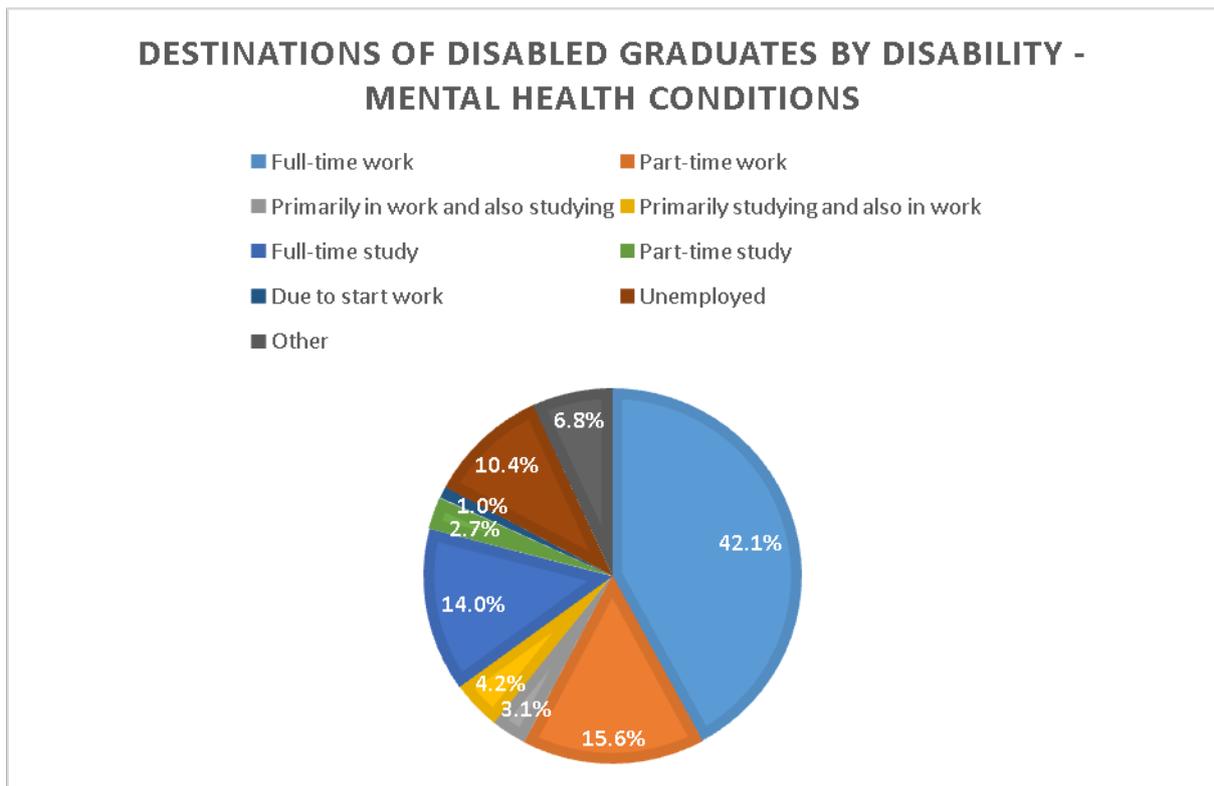


Figure A5

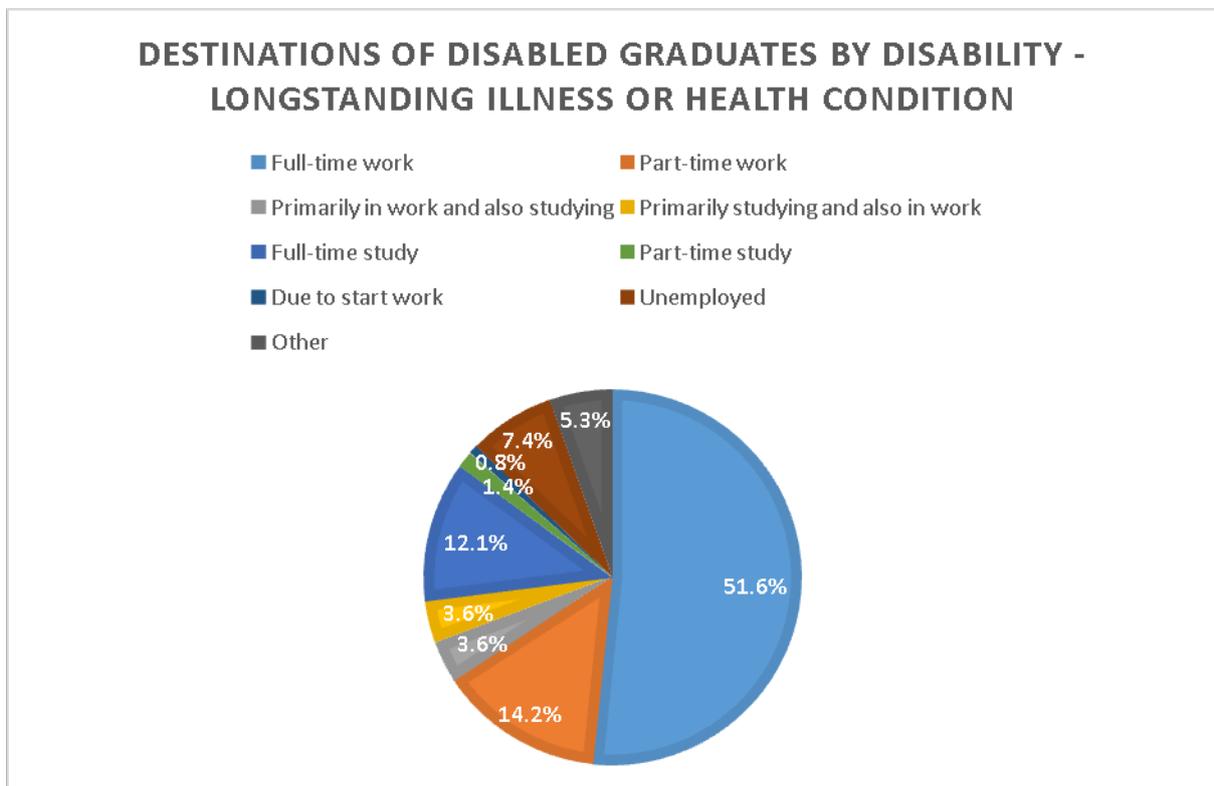


Figure A6

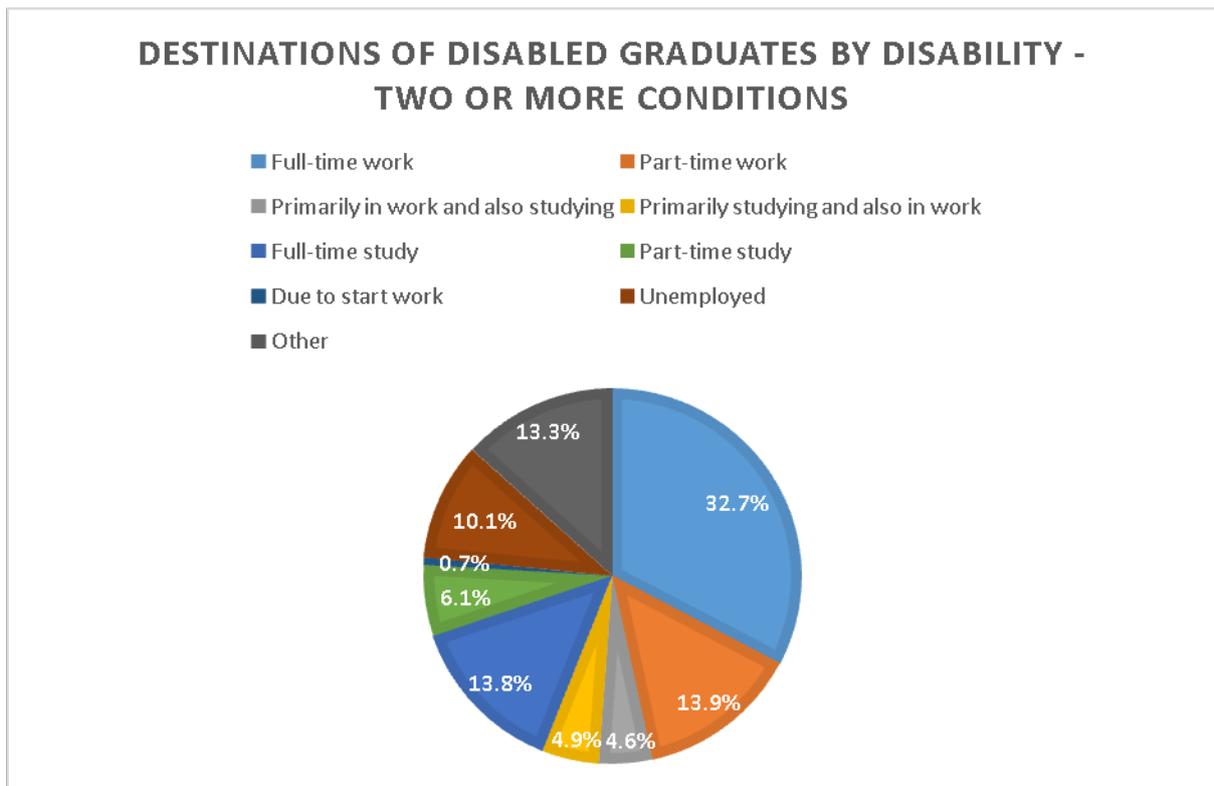


Figure A7

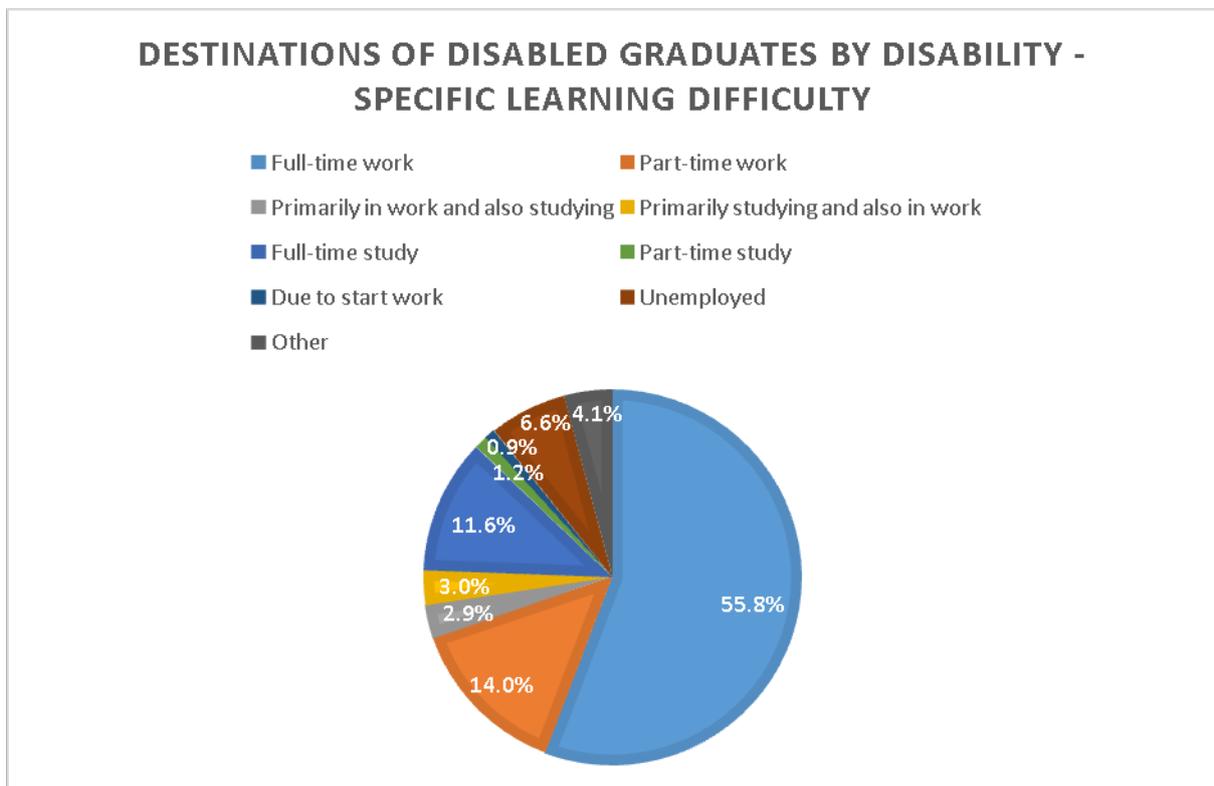


Figure A8

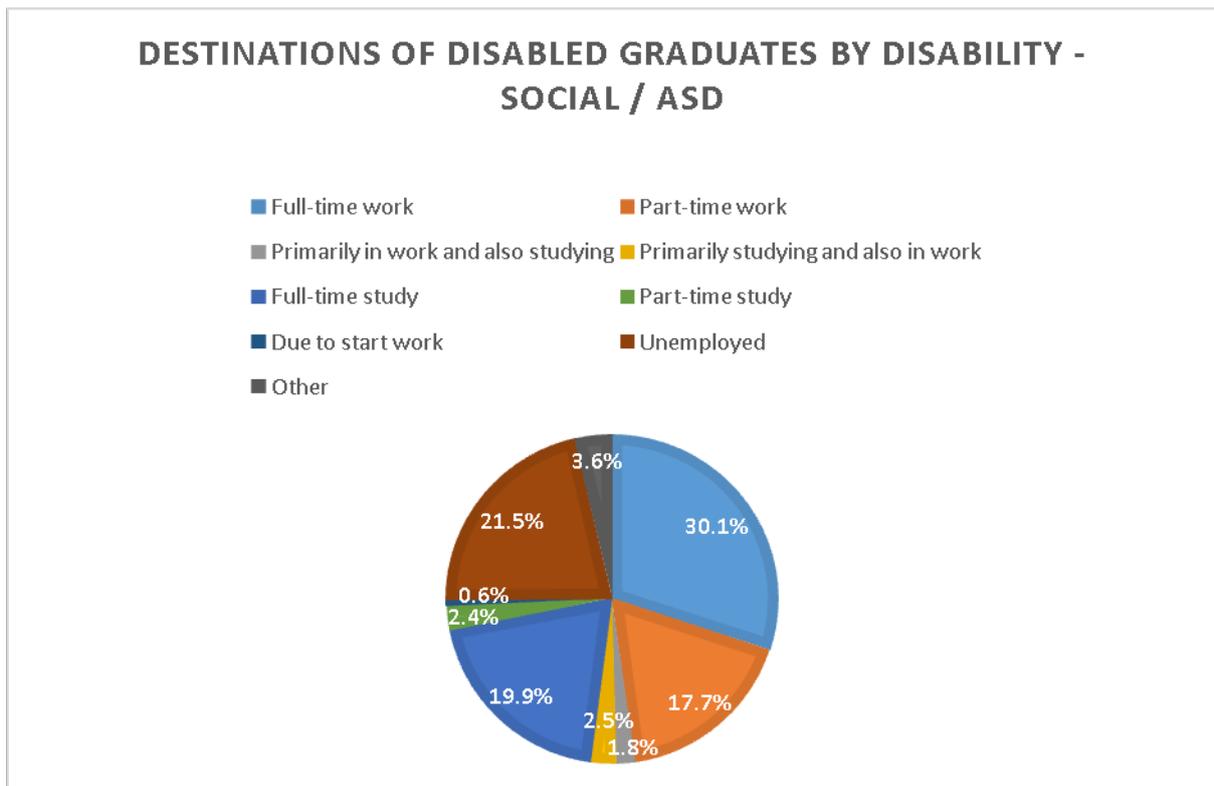


Figure A9

