



LEADERSHIP FOR BUSINESS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

# Talent Fishing

*What Businesses Want from Postgraduates*

Report to the BIS Postgraduate Review

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ADEPT Birmingham University June 21 2010

- \* The study formed part of the BIS Review March 2010 led by Prof. Adrian Smith DG Science and Research: One Step Beyond: making the most of postgraduate education  
[www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/p/10-704-one-step-beyond-postgraduate-education.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/p/10-704-one-step-beyond-postgraduate-education.pdf)
- \* All postgraduate study
- \* MBA level of study recognised as having some characteristics of its own and the subject of other research

Almost 100 HR Directors and other senior managers sent an on line survey. 43% responded. Plus issues and experiences were explored through interviews with:

American Express Technologies

Atkins

Atos Origin

BAE Systems

Dialog Devices

E-ON Engineering

HSBC

Institute of Employment Studies

Laser Optical Engineering

Microsoft

PRTM

Qinetiq

RIM

Selex Galileo

Syngenta

Telefonica Europe O2

## What for you is the value of recruiting staff with a Doctorate e.g. PhD, EngD, DPhil ?

Doctorates	strongly agree	agree	partly agree	disagree	total (excl n/a)
Subject-specific specialist knowledge	62%	24%	6%	9%	34
Research/technical skills	56%	31%	6%	8%	36
Analytical thinking/problem solving skills	58%	28%	8%	6%	36
Maturity	21%	32%	29%	18%	34
New ideas, help innovate	38%	35%	24%	3%	34
Guaranteed high calibre candidates	10%	26%	55%	23%	31
Future leadership potential	9%	27%	50%	18%	34

## What for you is the value of recruiting staff with a Masters e.g., MA, MPhil?

Masters	strongly agree	agree	partly agree	disagree	total (excl n/a)
Subject-specific specialist knowledge	46%	34%	14%	9%	35
Research/technical skills	33%	46%	18%	3%	33
Analytical thinking/problem solving skills	52%	40%	6%	3%	33
Maturity	15%	39%	33%	12%	33
New ideas, help innovate	24%	50%	24%	3%	34
Guaranteed high calibre candidates	6%	24%	52%	18%	33
Future leadership potential	16%	34%	44%	6.30%	32

# Types of Employers: Trawlers

- \* 'Our graduate recruitment is centred on hiring graduates with a high quality first degree.'  
Senior manager - financial services
- \* 'MBA or Masters graduates apply but more so those with Bachelor degrees. They are paid the same, there is no direct correlation seen in degree and performance but there is a slight difference in maturity and they can handle the ups and downs of business life better.'  
Senior manager – IT services

# Spearfishers

- \* 'The number of postgraduates hired is relatively small and in engineering and production teams that require very specific knowledge.' Senior manager - energy

# Anglers

- \* 'Someone with a postgraduate qualification can draw on this to demonstrate their technical proficiency.'  
Senior manager – telecoms
- \* Employers may prefer postgraduates for a particular role or function and because they can be more mature and contribute more quickly. In some instances, a good first degree plus work experience may be equally suitable.



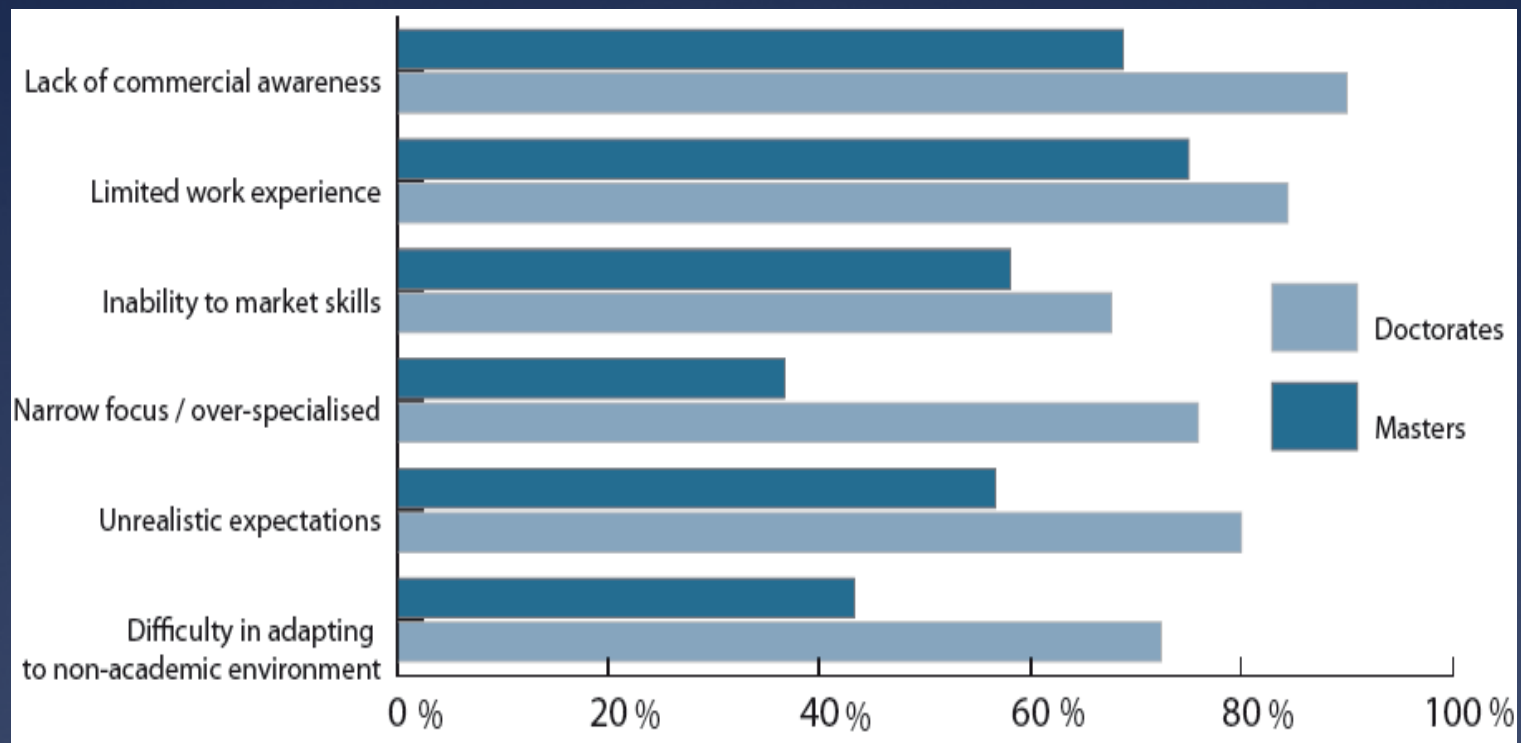
# Harvesters

- \* These use multiple means to attract postgraduates:
  - \* specialists into research
  - \* generalists into finance, HR and other professional functions.

# Baitless

- \* These don't seek postgraduates and see no value.

# Issues for Employers



David Docherty, Chief Executive of the Council for Industry and Higher Education:

- \* "We know that postgraduates are important drivers of innovation, entrepreneurship and growth and that many employers value postgraduate level skills.
- \* However, HEIs and businesses could do more to work together to ensure postgraduates have the business-facing skills that employers need – particularly leadership skills and work experience."

# Dandelions and Gems

- \* 'To be employed is to be at risk, to be employable is to be secure' Dr. Peter Hawkins, *The Art of Building Windmills*
- \* Dandelions in Essex
- \* Oxford obscurations
- \* Finns, Japanese, Dutch

# Action Points

- \* Careers Services

- \* Target employers who are potential PGR hirers and who don't
- \* Investigate ways to piggy back more PG internships on KT activities

- \* Academics

- \* Continue to foster formal and informal links with business (clusters of excellence)
- \* Help PGRs value their study and appreciate their transferability

# Action Points

- \* Researchers

- \* Develop your

- \* Knowledge

- \* Aptitudes

- \* Skills

- \* Experience

- \* Tune into employer expectations on competences

- \* Understand, evidence and articulate