

Graduate Index

September 2021



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1 Introduction

Until now the reporting of successful higher education outcomes has focused mainly on employment – how many graduates are in paid work, whether they're in 'professional' occupations, and what salary they earn. But this only showcases a part of the impact higher education can have.

That's where IFF's Graduate Index comes in. It's designed to shine a spotlight on the broader outcomes graduates achieve – looking at personal and social measures such as confidence, resilience and fulfilment – and provide a holistic view of how the higher education experience shapes the lives of graduates.

What is the Graduate Index?

The Graduate Index is a survey that measures graduates' successes across a series of social and personal measures. Graduates answer 36 questions on a 5-point scale across the 7 following areas:



We use the data generated from each of these seven areas to assign every graduate an overall 'index score' to give a measure of success. Graduates' scores can be grouped to demonstrate the relative performance of different subject areas, university groups, study modes and levels or key graduate demographics.

The Inaugural Graduate Index

For the first Graduate Index, we hosted an online survey open to graduates who completed a higher education course at a UK institution in either the 2015/2016 or 2017/2018 academic years (3 or 5 years ago). The survey ran for 5 weeks over the summer and in total we achieved just under 2,000 responses from both undergraduates and postgraduates. We weighted the survey data at the analysis stage to correct for any non-response bias.

In this introductory report, we present some of the key findings emerging from the Graduate Index survey, reveal the very first overall Graduate Index score and how this, and the seven component measures vary by university group and subject area. Unless stated otherwise, all differences are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, but bear in mind that this is a report of indicative findings based on an experimental dataset.

Over the coming weeks and months, we'll be sharing more detailed findings from this research and will then be extending the opportunity to participate in the Graduate Index to all HEIs in the UK.

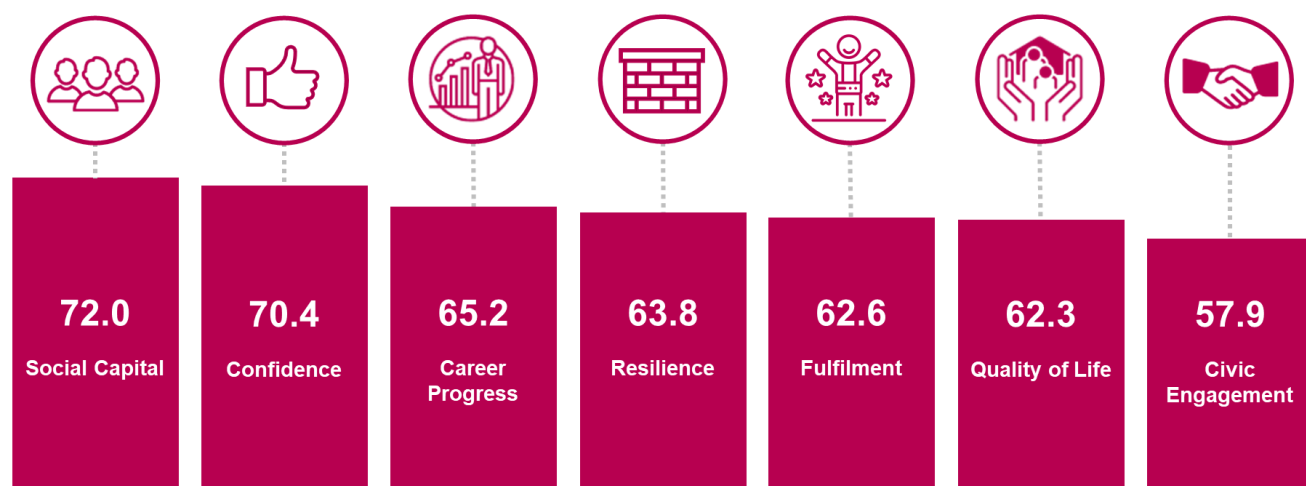
2 Overall Graduate Index Score

The overall Graduate Index score is derived by calculating a mean score of the answers graduates give on a 5-point scale to 36 different questions across 7 different social and personal measures. The maximum score possible is 100.

The overall Graduate Index score for this first survey, across all graduates and across all 7 measures combined is 65.0. This score provides a benchmark against which scores for all graduate types, subjects and university groups can be measured, along with all future iterations of the Graduate Index survey.



Below we show how the overall Graduate Index breaks down across each of the seven areas that make up the composite score. The seven areas are given equal weighting when calculating the overall Graduate Index.



Graduates score highly on social capital, defined as the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together¹. For the purposes of the Graduate Index, the social capital score covered a number of different aspects such as an individual's sense of belonging to community, how comfortable they feel when spending time with people who are different to them and the extent to which they have a supportive network around them.

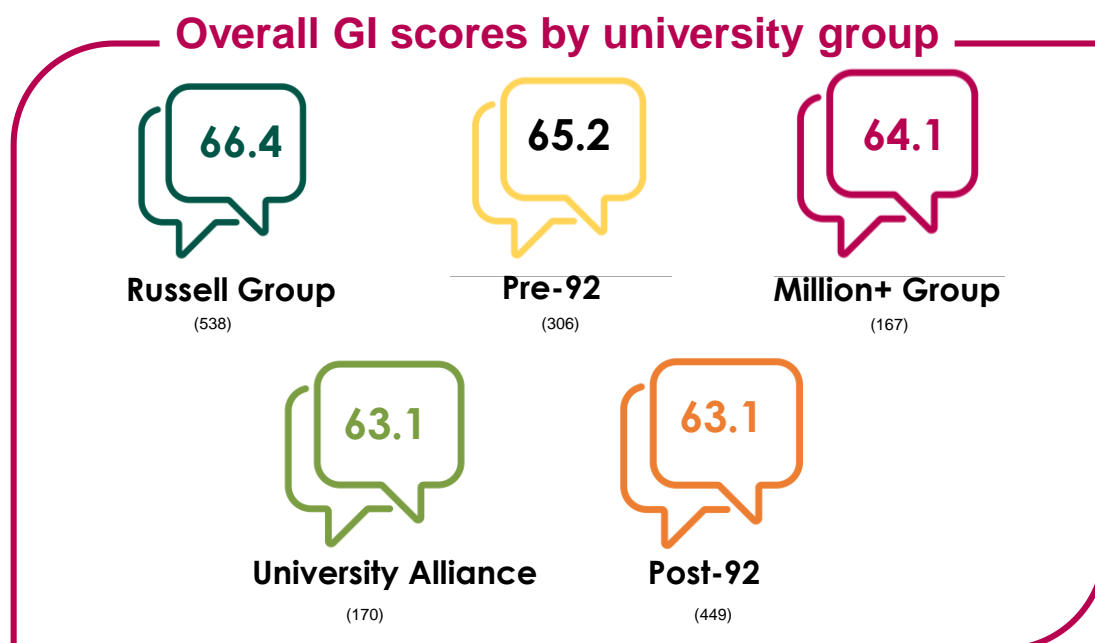
Graduates also score highly on confidence which covers a number of different tasks or situations including decision making, leadership and managing disagreement or conflict.

Scores are fairly consistent across career progression, resilience, fulfilment and quality of life. Graduates scoring slightly lower on civic engagement, which looks at, among other things, graduates' involvement and interest in political and social issues and their lifestyle choices on issues relating to the environment and consumerism.

¹ [OECD](#) Insights: Human Capital

3 The Graduate Index by university group

In this next section we look at the variance in the overall Graduate Index score as well as the seven component areas, by university group².



Overall Graduate Index scores vary little by university group – the difference between the highest scoring group and the lowest is limited to just 3.3 points.

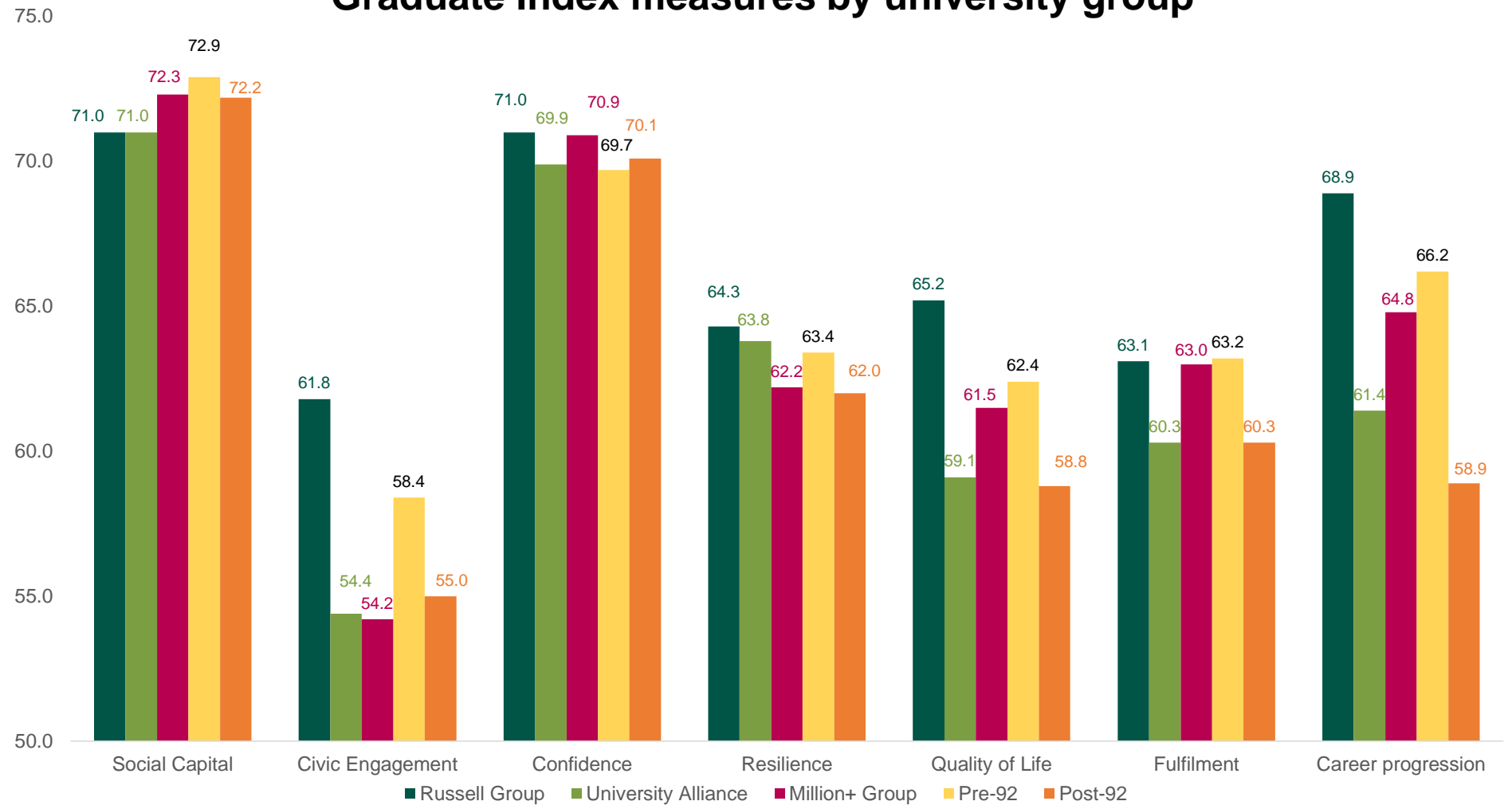
Russell Group universities score highest on the Graduate Index, with an overall score of 66.4 with Pre-92 institutions a close second, scoring 65.2.

But this is only part of the picture. Breaking down the Graduate Index scores further and comparing the scores of the seven constituent areas of the Graduate Index by university group, provides some interesting analysis.

We've seen that Russell Group universities score highest overall. They perform especially well on the quality of life and career progression measures compared to other groups and is likely linked to the profile of students this groups attracts, who are typically from a higher socioeconomic background and achieve higher prior attainment levels. The comparatively high quality of life score is down to Russell Group graduates reporting higher levels of disposable income and better physical wellbeing.

² Small / specialist institutions are not included in this analysis due to low base sizes.

Graduate Index measures by university group



Base: RG 538; UA 170; M+ 167; Pre-92 306; Post-92 449

However, the Russell Group does not score highest across all seven individual measures. For social capital, they score joint lowest with University Alliance at 71.0, while on fulfilment, they are on a par with Pre-92 and Million+. When it comes to confidence, they are on par with Million+, with relatively little difference across university group. So, while Russell Group universities come out top overall, they certainly don't sweep the board.

Pre-92 institutions also perform consistently well, scoring at least 2nd highest on 5 of the 7 measures, including highest on social capital (72.9).

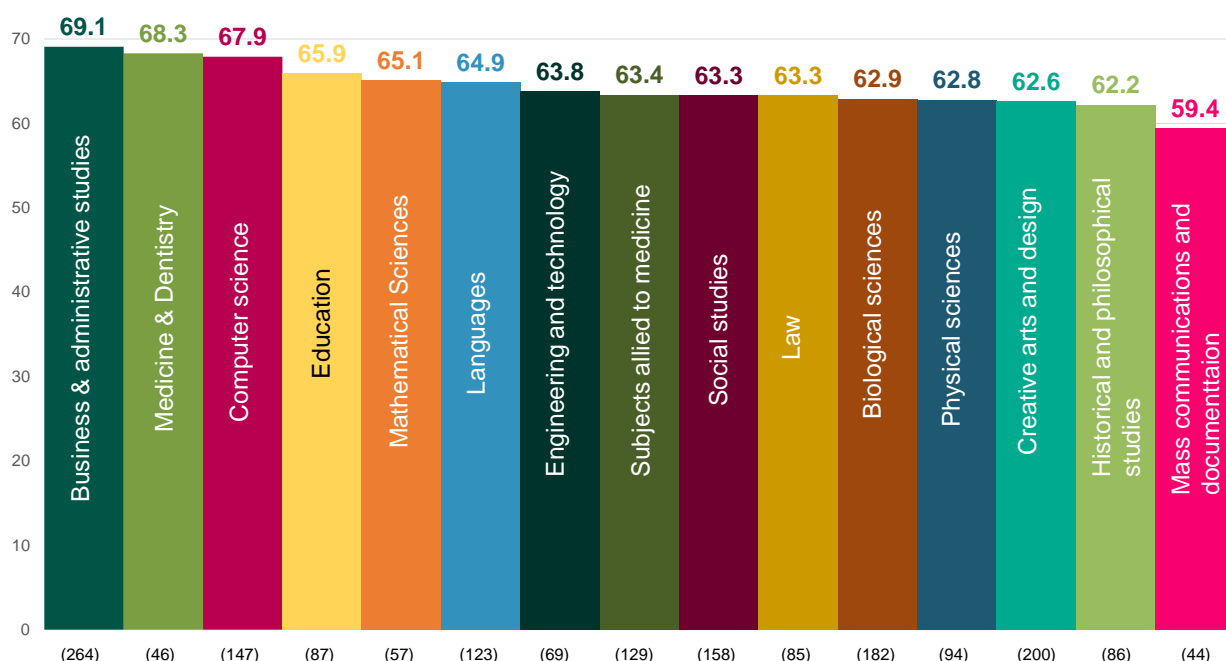
The index area that show greatest difference by institution type is career progression – a 10 point difference between the Russell Group and Post-92 institutions. Scores are also fairly mixed for Civic engagement and quality of life – with ranges of 6.8 and 6.4.

4 The Graduate Index by subject

In this next section we look at the variance in the overall Graduate Index score as well as the seven component areas, by subject of study¹.

Overall Graduate Index scores vary more considerably by subject than they do by university group. The difference between the highest scoring subject and the lowest scoring is 9.7 points (compared to 3.3 points by university group).

Overall Graduate Index scores by subject



Business and administrative studies scores highest (69.1), with Medicine and dentistry a close second (68.3) with and Computer science in third (67.9).

Graduate Index areas by subject

The table overleaf presents a more detailed breakdown of the Graduate Index scores for all seven Index measures by subjects. Subjects are ranked according to their overall Graduate Index score. For each index area, the highest scoring subject is shaded in a light green box, and the lowest, in a light red box. Figures in green text denote subjects that score at least 1 full point above the average for that index area. Conversely, figures in red text show subjects scoring at least 1 full point less than the average for that index area. The average score for each area is given in the bottom row.

¹ The following subjects are excluded from analysis due to small base sizes: Veterinary science, Agriculture & related subjects, Architecture, building & planning and Combined

	Overall	Social capital	Civic engagement	Confidence	Resilience	Quality of life	Fulfilment	Career progression
Business and administrative studies	69.1	74.3	62.6	74.8	68.1	67.5	66.1	71.0
Medicine and dentistry	68.3	71.2	59.5	71.8	72.3	68.1	65.9	79.5
Computer science	67.9	72.5	60.9	70.3	69.6	67.8	66.1	70.6
Education	65.9	74.7	59.0	70.3	62.5	62.5	66.0	67.7
Mathematical sciences	65.1	67.7	60.1	69.0	65.5	64.7	62.3	69.3
Languages	64.9	74.4	60.5	71.6	61.1	57.9	62.4	63.4
Engineering and technology	63.8	71.1	54.5	72.1	64.6	60.3	58.9	63.1
Subjects allied to medicine	63.4	70.7	51.6	69.7	64.1	60.5	64.5	68.2
Social studies	63.3	72.3	55.8	68.1	59.9	61.4	62.3	60.7
Law	63.3	69.9	57.1	69.5	64.8	60.2	56.4	62.1
Biological sciences	62.9	70.9	55.2	69.1	62.0	58.8	61.2	62.0
Physical sciences	62.8	70.3	55.6	67.8	59.1	62.0	60.4	65.5
Creative arts	62.6	72.5	54.8	70.0	60.8	58.2	58.7	58.1
Historical and philosophical studies	62.2	69.6	59.1	68.0	58.8	57.9	57.9	57.3
Mass communications and documentation	59.4	65.9	59.5	64.5	56.3	53.5	56.2	47.5
Overall / average	65.0	72.0	57.9	70.4	63.8	62.3	62.6	65.2

As the highest scoring subject overall, Business and administrative studies scores highest on three index areas - civic engagement (62.6) confidence (74.8) and jointly on fulfilment with Computer science (66.1)

Medicine and dentistry graduates score highest on three of the individual index measures. Graduates of these subjects are by far and away most satisfied with their career progression, scoring 79.5 on this measure, more than 8 points higher than Business and administrative studies in second place which scores (71.0). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given what Medicine graduates in particular have faced over the last 18 months or so dealing with COVID, medics and dentists also score highest on resilience (72.3). Medicine and dentistry is also the highest scoring subject on quality of life (68.1).

Education scores well generally, with an overall Graduate Index score of 65.9 equating to 4th place. Of all the subject areas, Education graduates score highest on social capital (74.7) and third highest on fulfilment (66.0).

In line with the overall index scores, Mass communications and documentation performs least well across most of the individual measures with the exception of civic engagement, where it comes joint 5th with an above average score of 59.5. Instead Engineering and technology occupies bottom place on civic engagement.

Mathematical Sciences is the subject area that is most consistent in its scores across the 7 constituent index areas with a range of 9.2. The subject performs best on career progression (69.3) and worst on civic engagement (60.1). It is the only subject, along with Medicine and Dentistry to achieve its highest score on career progression.

As well as being the 3rd highest scoring subject on the Graduate Index, Computer science also scores very consistently across all 7 measures with a range in scores of 11.6 (the highest score being 72.5 for social capital and the lowest score for civic engagement at 60.9).

Medicine and dentistry demonstrates the widest ranging scores across the 7 measures and is due to the high score for career progression as already noted (79.5). Other subjects performing more erratically across the 7 areas are subjects allied to medicine with a range of 19.1 points (because of its low civic engagement score) and Mass communications & documentation with a range of 18.4 (due to its low career progression score).

The general trend across subjects is for social capital to rank highest and civic engagement, lowest. However, this isn't the case for all subjects:

- Engineering & technology and Business & administrative studies which both score highest on confidence (Social capital ranks 2nd for both subjects)
- Mass communications and documentation and Historical and Philosophical studies which score lowest on career progression
- Languages which scores lowest on quality of life and Law which scores lowest on fulfilment

Looking across the individual index measures, scores range most widely on career progression and is a result of Mass communications and documentation scoring so low here (47.5) and Medicine and Dentistry so highly (79.5) - a difference of 32 points. These two single subjects are responsible for such a wide-ranging score here – if we were to remove them, then the difference would be somewhat smaller at 13.7 points, but career progression would still remain one of the more variable metrics in

terms of scores achieved. Scores are most consistent on social capital with a range of 8.8 and fulfilment 9.9.

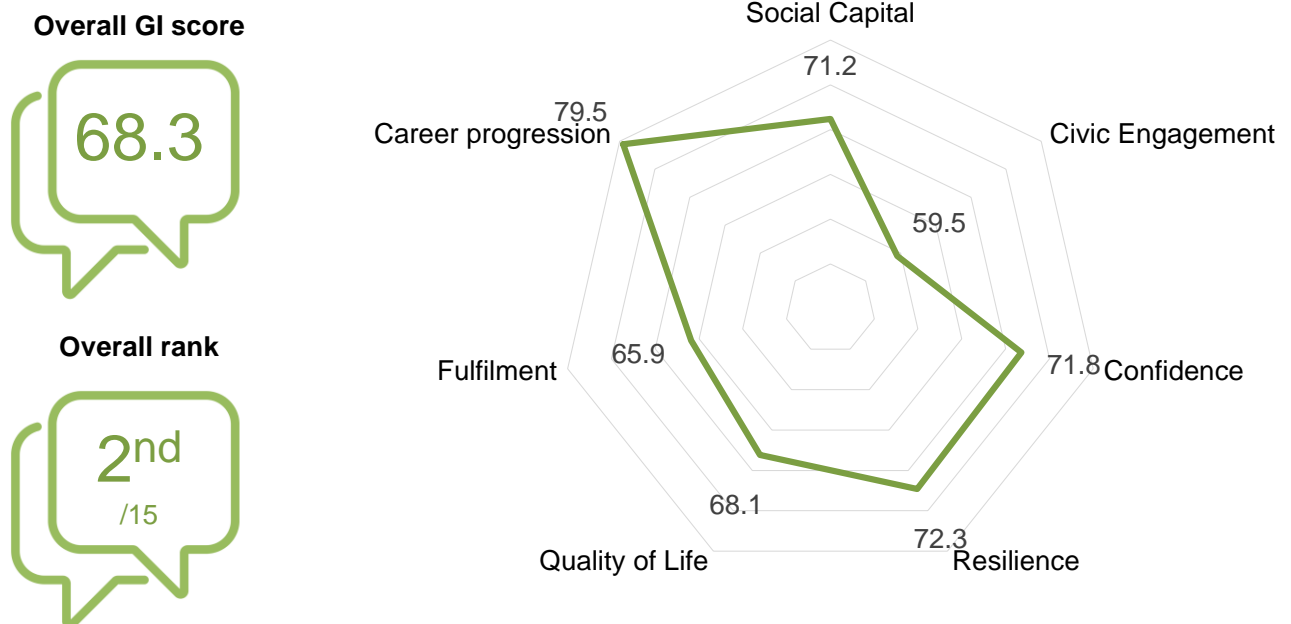
Key subject areas

Throughout this section so far, we've identified a number of subjects of interest, including the top performing subjects on Graduate Index, those that perform more variably across the seven individual index areas as well as those that don't quite conform to the overall trend. In this next section, we're going to dive into a few subject areas to understand a bit more about what's driving their Index scores.

Medicine and Dentistry

We saw earlier that of all the subject areas, Medicine and dentistry graduates score highest on three of the individual index measures – career progression, resilience and quality of life.

Medicine and Dentistry Graduate Index scores



Base: All Medicine and Dentistry graduates (46)

Such a high score on career progression is not surprising given that more than half of all Medicine and dentistry graduates in work at the time of the Graduate Index survey consider this to be the job that they want to be doing long term (57% compared to 42% of all graduates in work), while a further third (32%) of medics and dentists consider it a stepping stone into the type of work they want to be doing long term.

We also mentioned that perhaps unsurprisingly, and likely a result of the pandemic, Medicine and dentistry graduates report the highest resilience score. Out of all the statements that make up the resilience score, these graduates score highest on 'I can usually handle whatever comes my way' (81.0) which likely reflects the need for them to work in a responsive and agile manner. However, that's not to say that working in such an environment doesn't take its toll, as the resilience statement

they score lowest on is 'When things go wrong, I usually get over it quickly' (64.4). This suggests that these graduates very much take the outcomes of their working day home with them.

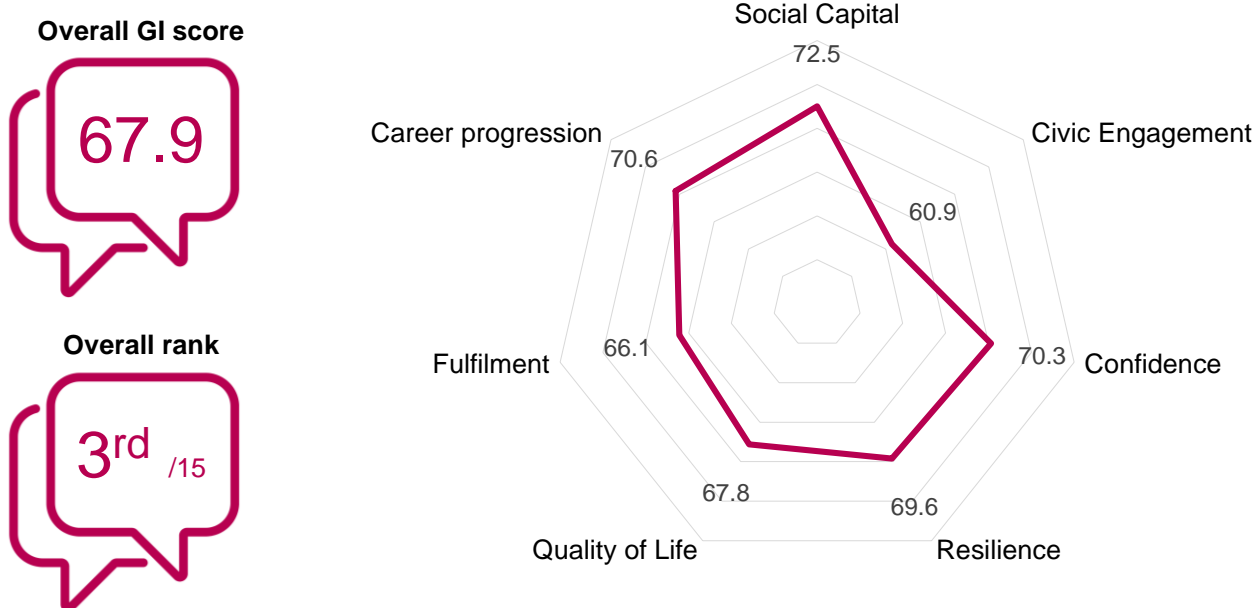
In terms of quality of life, the statement that resonates most with medics and dentists compared to graduates of other subjects areas is: 'How much disposable income you have' for which they score 65.7 (compared to an average of 53.0). This finding reflects what LEO data has so far shown us – that graduates of Medicine and Dentistry are the highest paid of all subjects areas (and by quite some way)¹. They also score comparatively better (although to a lesser extent than regarding income) on their physical and mental wellbeing (66.9 and 65.8 compared to 60.6 and 57.9 overall).

Computer Science

Next, we look at Computer science, which was previously identified by the Shadbolt Review in 2016 as being a subject area that faced challenges around employment outcomes for a number of graduates but has reported above average employment outcomes for science subjects in HESA's Graduate Outcomes 17/18 and has performed well on the Graduate Index.

The subject is ranked 3rd overall on the Graduate Index and along with Business and administrative studies, is the highest scoring subject for fulfilment (66.1).

Computer Science Graduate Index scores



Base: All Computer Science graduates (147)

Out of all the statements that make up the Fulfilment score, these graduates score highest on 'I'm currently spending most or all of my time doing something that is meaningful to me' (70.7). Naturally, a good proportion of these graduates are working in roles directly related to their subject area; almost half (48%) are working as science, research, engineering and technology professionals while a further 17% are corporate managers or directors (this compares to an average of 9% of all working graduates who are corporate managers or directors). So not only are a good proportion of these graduates finding jobs in an area in which they studied and are interested in, but they are also in positions of leadership from which they can influence and enact change. This is likely driving their

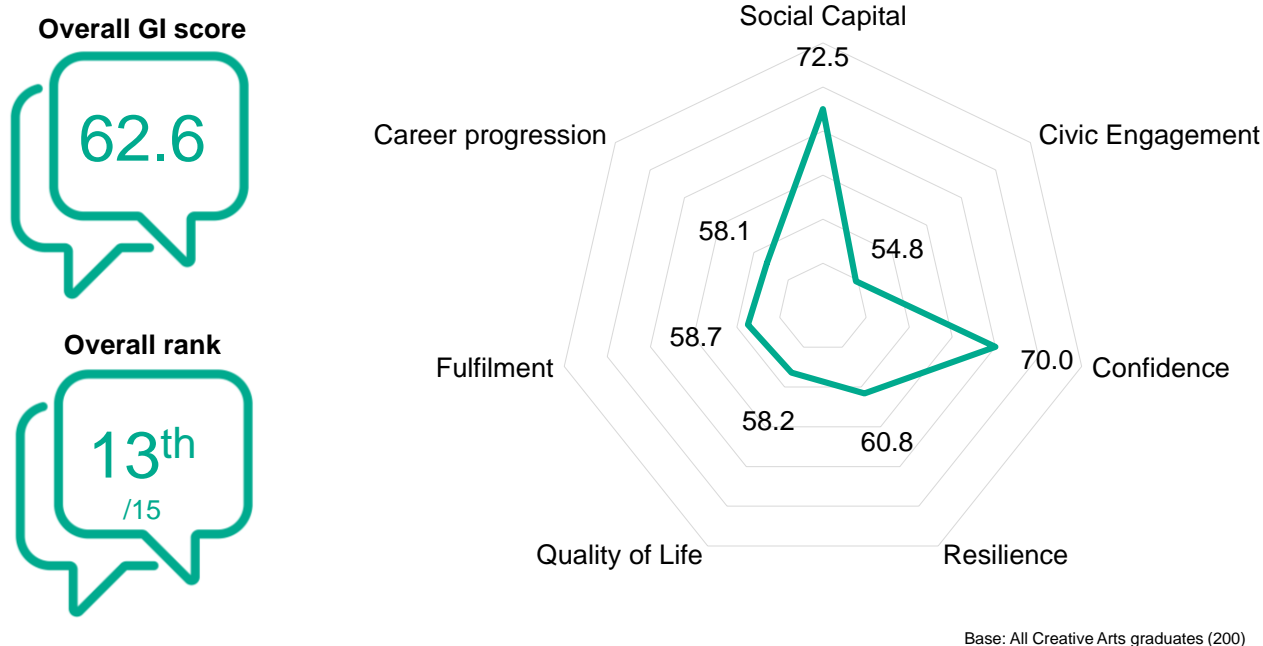
¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/graduate-outcomes-by-degree-subject-and-university>

high ranking (3rd) for career progression (70.6) behind Medicine and Dentistry and Business and administrative studies.

Creative Arts

Now we consider the Creative Arts in light of the recently approved funding cuts and their generally lower performance on traditional outcomes metrics such as salary and occupational level.

Creative Arts Graduate Index scores



Out of all the measures, Creative Arts graduates score highest on social capital (72.5) and confidence (70.0). On the remaining areas, Creative Arts graduates score fairly poorly and consistently below average. The chart above highlights the stark difference in scores between social capital and confidence versus the remaining 5 areas.

There's nothing that particularly stands out about the answers Creative Arts graduates give to any of the individual questions that make up either the social capital or confidence areas which means they appear to be fairly well rounded when it comes to both these attributes.

At 3-5 years out of university, these graduates are still more likely than graduates from other subjects areas to be working on a self-employed basis, freelancing or running their own business (23% compared to 12% overall) or developing a creative, artistic or professional portfolio (31% compared to 11% overall). They are twice as likely as other graduates who are in work to say that the job they are currently doing does not fit into their career plan (18% of Creative Arts graduates who are working compared to an average of 9% of all graduates who are working).

5 Graduate Index by occupation

In this next section, we review the distribution of Graduate Index scores by the major Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) groups².

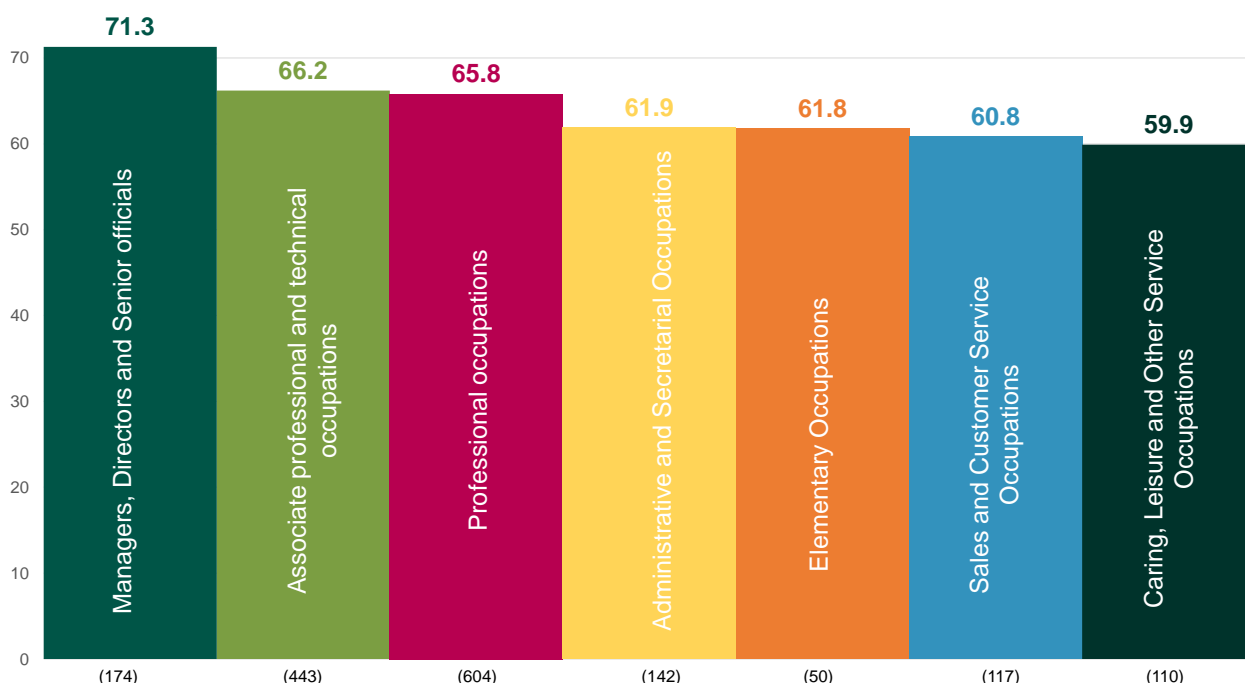
Based on the Graduate Index scores achieved, occupations can be broadly categorised into 3 groups as follows:

1. Managers, directors and senior officials (SOC 1) leading the way (top performing on the Graduate Index)
2. Associate professional and technical Occupations (SOC 3) and Professional occupations (SOC 2) roughly equivalent in second place
3. Administrative and secretarial occupations (SOC 4), elementary occupations (SOC 9), sales and customer service occupations (SOC 7) and caring, leisure and other service occupations (SOC 6) all performing more or less on a par with one another but less well than the other two groups.

The variance in scores between managers, directors and senior officials and caring, leisure and other service occupations is high - a full 11.4 points.

Overall Graduate Index scores are higher for more highly skilled occupations or professional level roles - SOC levels 1-3 than for lower skilled roles - SOC level 4-7 (66.9 versus 61.2)

Overall Graduate Index scores by occupation



² Both skilled trades occupations (SOC 5) and process, plant and machine operatives (SOC 8) are excluded from this sub group analysis due to low base sizes (30 or less).

Graduate Index areas by occupation

In line with the overall Graduate Index score, **all occupations achieve their highest score on social capital** (albeit managers, directors and senior officials also score as highly on confidence) but not all score lowest on civic engagement. Three of the seven groups instead score lower on fulfilment and career progression, and these are:

1. Administrative and secretarial occupations
2. Sales and customer service occupations
3. Elementary Occupations.

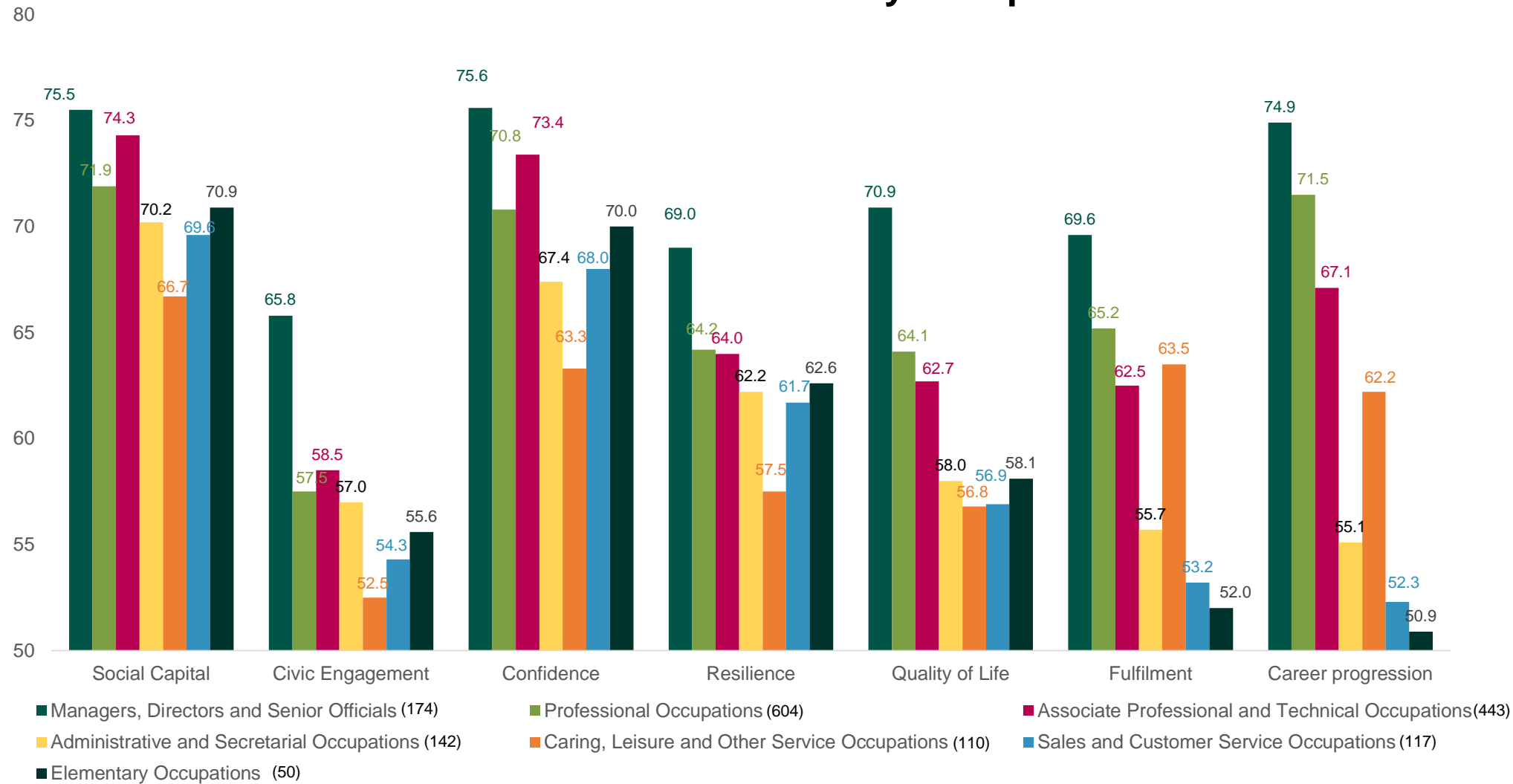
In keeping with the overall trend, **managers, directors and senior officials achieve the highest scores across all 7 index areas** (highest for confidence – 75.6 and lowest for civic engagement 65.8).

Caring, leisure and other service occupations come out with the lowest overall Graduate Index score and score lowest across most areas – social capital (66.7), civic engagement (52.5) confidence (63.3), resilience (57.5) and quality of life (56.8).

Across index areas, scores are most wide ranging for career progression with a difference of 24 points between managers, directors and senior officials (74.9) and elementary occupations (50.9). Scores are least variable on the social capital measure with a difference of 8.8 points between managers, directors and senior officials (75.5) and caring leisure and other service occupations (66.7).

Within occupation, **scores fluctuate most for elementary occupations** which is driven by a very low career progression score (50.9) compared to a score of 70.9 on social capital – a difference of 20 points. Meanwhile, scores are most consistent among graduates working in managerial, director and senior official roles with a range of just 6 points. As with subject area, it is possible to further deep dive into different occupations to understand what is driving their Graduate Index score and we shall release this analysis in the coming weeks.

Graduate Index measures by occupation

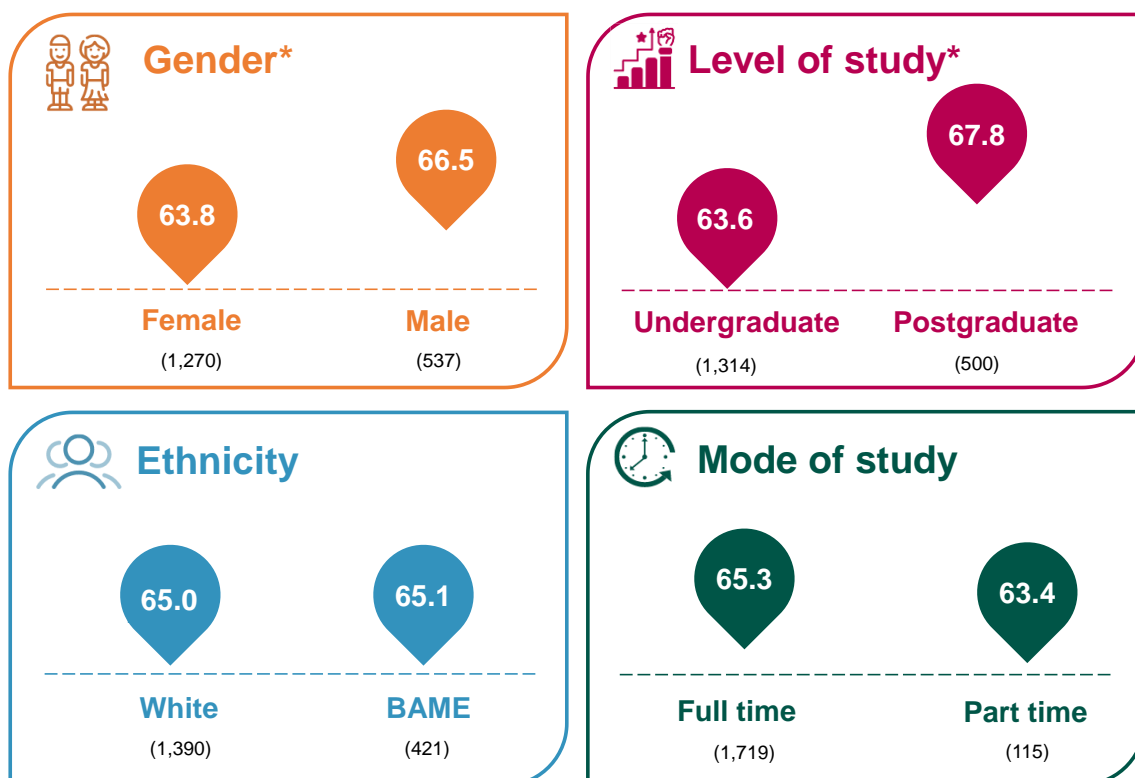


6 The Graduate Index by key graduate groups

In this final section we cut the Graduate Index according to graduate study and demographic characteristics.

Graduate Index scores vary by certain graduate characteristics. While scores remain fairly consistent according to mode of study and ethnicity (when comparing white graduates with BAME graduates), there are differences by gender and level of study. **Male graduates achieve a higher Graduate Index score than female graduates (66.5 versus 63.8) as do postgraduates compared to undergraduates (67.8 versus 63.6).** The difference in scores by level of study is not surprising given this group are generally older and arguably more established in their thinking about their personal and social goals and in progressing against these aspirations.

Overall GI Scores by Key Characteristics

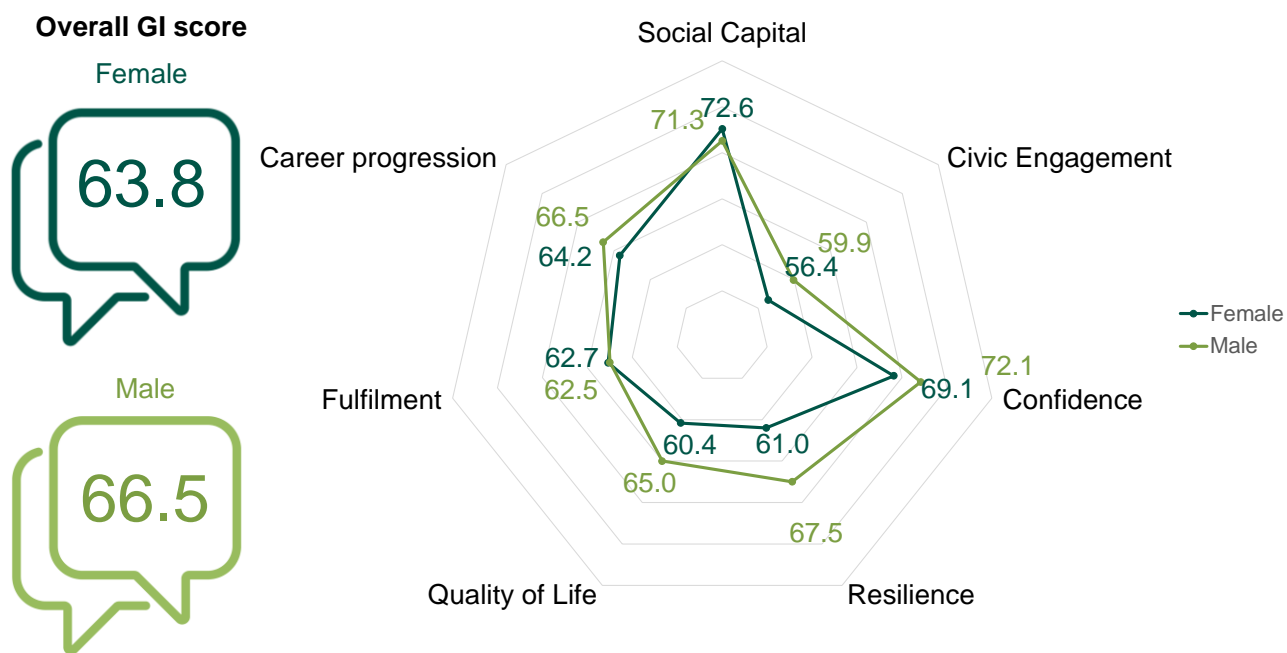


* denotes a statistically significant difference

Graduate Index scores by gender

The difference in the overall Graduate Index score between male and female graduates is small, but significant (2.7 points). Male graduates achieve higher scores on four of the seven areas that make up the overall Graduate index score - civic engagement, confidence, resilience and quality of life.

Graduate Index Measures by Gender



Of all the index areas, male graduates score highest on confidence (72.1). Indeed, there are seven statements that make up the confidence metric and male graduates achieve a higher score than female graduates on all but two of these statements – these range from assuming leadership roles, trying things that are new, making decisions, managing disagreement and conflict and speaking in public.

The two exceptions, where female graduates score higher than their male counterparts are two quite contrary statements – teamwork and solitary working:

- Working with other people in a team (81.4 versus 77.6) and;
- Getting on with things on my own (83.9 versus 80.8)

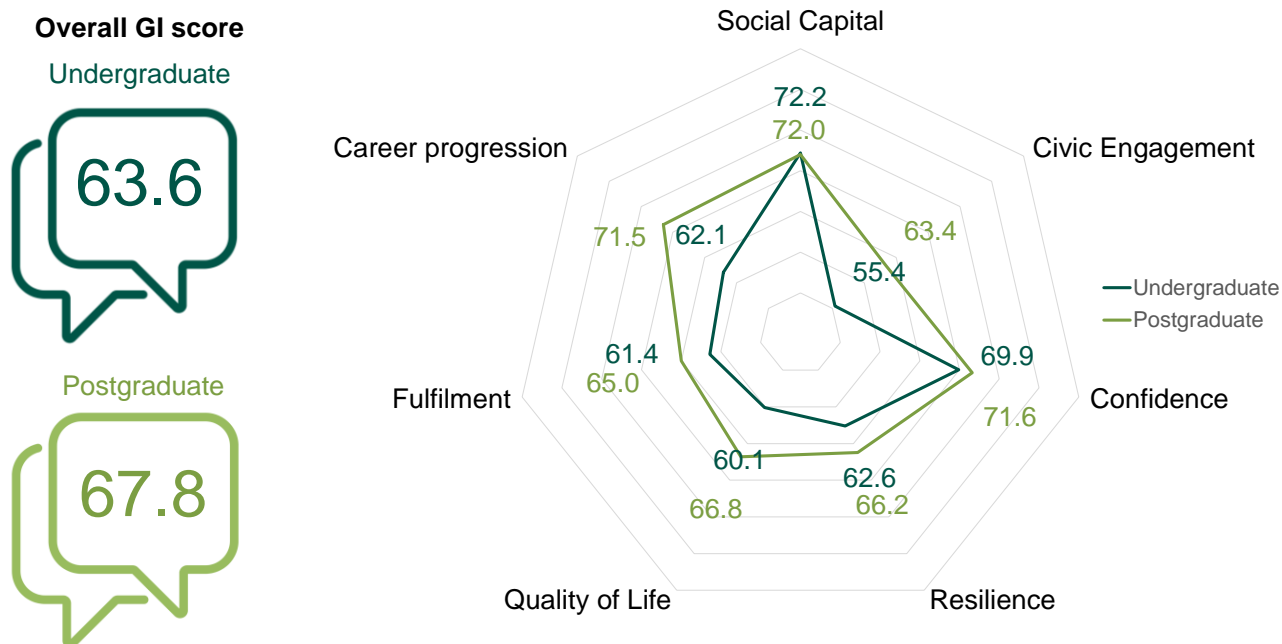
The area where there is greatest difference between male and female graduates is resilience, where male graduates' score is 6.5 points higher than females. Not only do male graduates report much higher resilience levels than female graduates, but they do so comprehensively across all statements that make up the resilience measure.

In keeping with the overall trend, female graduates achieve their highest score on social capital (72.6) and lowest on Civic engagement (56.4).

Graduate Index scores by Level of Study

Overall, postgraduates achieve a Graduate Index score of 67.8 which is 4.2 points higher than undergraduates. They also score higher scores across five of the seven constituent index areas including, civic engagement, resilience, quality of life, fulfilment and career progression.

Graduate Index Measures by level of study



Of the 7 index areas, postgraduates score highest on social capital closely followed by confidence (71.6) and career progression (71.5).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the starkest difference between undergraduates and postgraduates is in relation to career progression with a variance of 9.4 points. This is likely a product of postgraduates being much more likely to report being in a job that they intend to be doing in the long term (54% compared to 35% of undergraduates).

Graduate Index scores by ethnicity

At the summary level there is no real difference in the Graduate Index score between white and BAME graduates (65.0 and 65.1 respectively). **There is also relatively little distinction between the two groups across the individual index areas, with the exception of resilience, where BAME graduates score higher than their white counterparts** (65.8 compared to 63.2). This looks to be driven in the main by Black, African, Caribbean or Black British graduates specifically, whose resilience score is highest of all ethnicities (70.4).

Black, African, Caribbean or Black British graduates also stand out when it comes to confidence scoring highest of all ethnic groups on this measure (76.1) - 8.1 points higher than Asian or Asian British graduates who score lowest on this area.

Ten takeouts from the first Graduate Index survey



The inaugural Graduate Index score is 65.0. Of the 7 constituent areas that make up the Graduate Index, graduates score highest on social capital and lowest on civic engagement.



Graduate Index scores are highest among Russell Group graduates; however they do not score highest on all 7 Graduate Index measures. **Pre-92 institutions also perform consistently well;** ranking 2nd overall and at least 2nd on 5 of the 7 individual measures.



The subject a graduate studied appears to have greater bearing on the Graduate Index score than the type of university they attended.

The top 3 performing subjects on the Graduate Index are: **Business and administrative studies, Medicine and Dentistry and Computer science.**



The individual index area that produces the greatest range in scores by subject is career progression (32 points).



Graduate Index scores are higher for occupations that would typically be described as 'graduate level' (SOC 1-3) than non-graduate level roles. Managers, directors and senior officials score highest overall and caring, leisure and other service occupations, lowest.



Male graduates achieve a higher Graduate Index score than their female counterparts. They score highest on the confidence metric and report comprehensively higher levels of resilience than female graduates.



Postgraduates achieve a higher Graduate Index score than undergraduates with the most notable difference in relation to relation to the career progression metric, scoring 9.4 points higher than undergraduates.



While the Graduate Index score for white and BAME graduates is comparable, BAME graduates are more resilient than their white counterparts. Black, African, Caribbean or Black British specifically, achieve high confidence scores.

If you'd like to sign your institution up to our Graduate Index, then please email: highereducation@iffresearch.com or call Catherine Turner on 0207 250 3035.

Technical Appendix

The weighted profile of graduates completing the first Graduate Index is shown in the table below.

	Proportion of all graduates completing GI
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	1,839
University Group	
Russell Group	31%
University Alliance	9%
Million+ Group	9%
Pre-92	16%
Post-92	22%
Small / Specialist	2%
Other	11%
Subject of study	
Medicine & dentistry	3%
Subjects allied to medicine	7%
Biological sciences	9%
Veterinary science	1%
Agriculture & related subjects	1%
Physical sciences	5%
Mathematical sciences	3%
Computer science	10%
Engineering & technology	4%
Architecture, building & planning	2%
Social studies	8%
Law	5%
Business & administrative studies	15%
Mass communications & documentation	2%
Languages	5%
Historical & philosophical studies	4%
Creative arts & design	10%
Education	5%
Combined	>1%
Mode of Study	

	Proportion of all graduates completing GI
Full-time	82%
Part-time	18%
Level of Study	
Undergraduate	67%
Postgraduate	32%
Gender	
Female	57%
Male	43%
Long term disability or health condition	
Yes	23%
No	74%

“

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Whether employer or employee, client or collaborator, we are all humans first and foremost. Recognising this essential humanity is central to how we conduct our business, and how we lead our lives. We respect and accommodate each individual's way of thinking, working and communicating, mindful of the fact that each has their own story and means of telling it.

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