

# **A new era for postgraduate education**

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# *The prominence (or not) of PGT concerns in the current HE debate*

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Browne review, concerning PG education:

- “Postgraduate education is a successful part of higher education system and there is no evidence that changes to funding or student finance are needed to support student demand or access.”
- “The private benefits of taught postgraduate education are predominant over the public benefits and have clearly tended to be sufficient to generate private investment.”
- “It is possible that, in the future if students are paying higher fees to enter undergraduate education, they will be less likely to participate in postgraduate study.”

# *Recent trends*

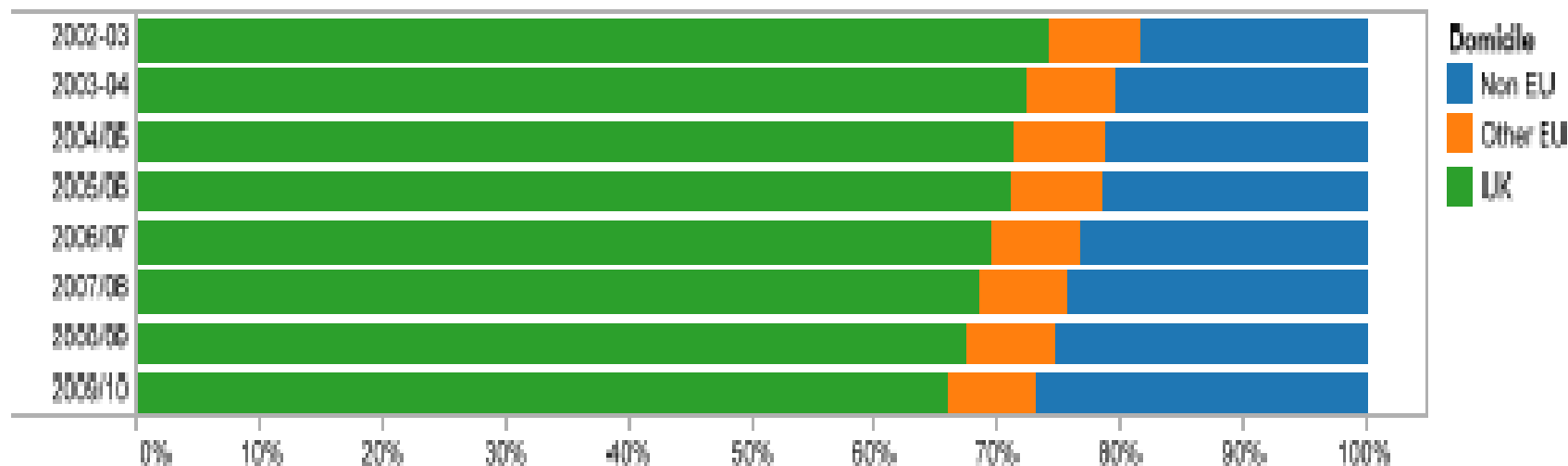
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Over the last decade in the UK:

- number of PGT students has grown by 40% (compared with a 24% per cent increase in UG and 9% decrease in PGR)
- PGT increased to 20% of the total student population, rising from 17%

Source: UUK, Patterns and Trends in UK HE, 2011

# *National origins of PGT students*



## **PGT students by domicile**

Source: UUK, from HESA (2011)

# *Three perspectives on PGT education*

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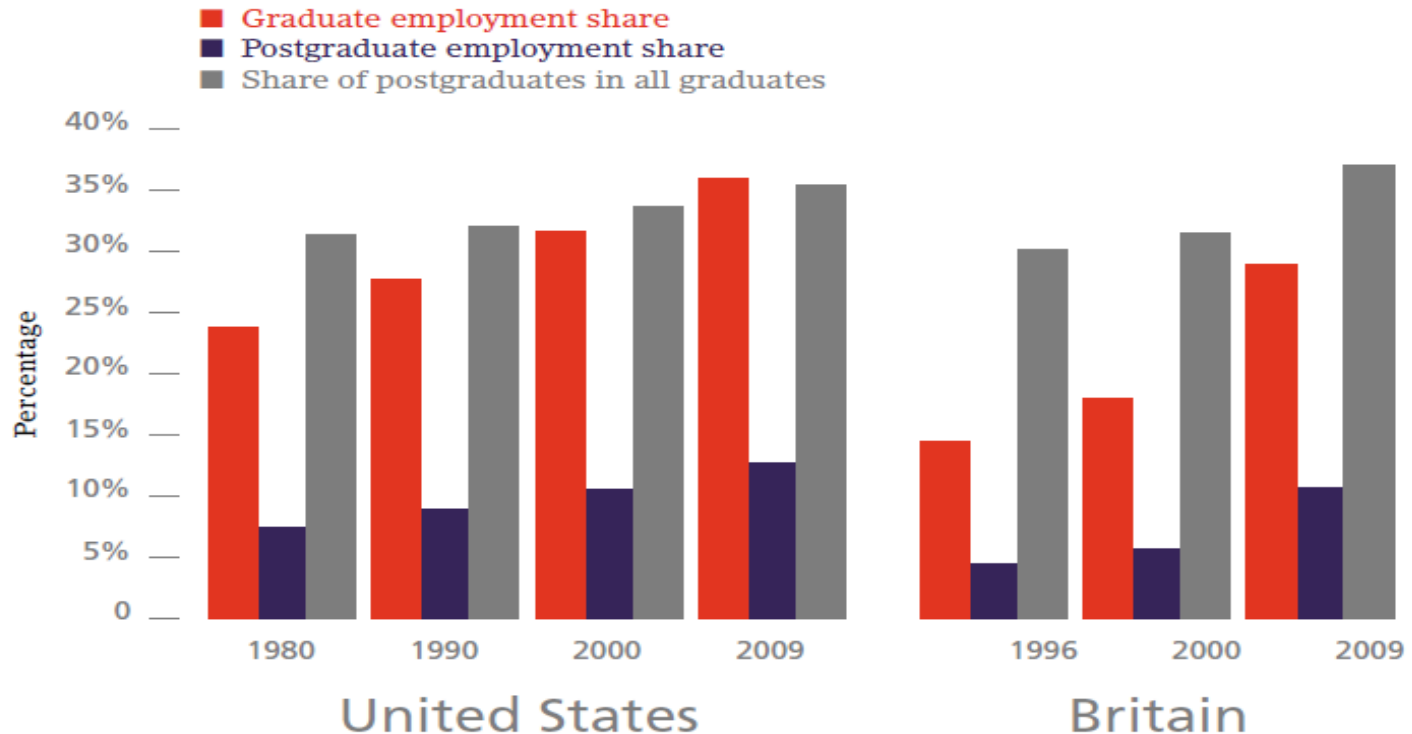
- Student/individual beneficiary
- University/institution delivering education
- National (UK) interest

# *Student motivations for PGT education*

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- To achieve a professional qualification
- To prepare for a research degree
- To move between disciplines
- To otherwise differentiate themselves from other graduates

# *Proportions of graduates and postgraduates in the labour force*



Employment share of all graduates and postgraduates; Source: LSE Centrepiece (2011)

# Will postgraduate education become the new frontier in fair access/widening participation?

cf. Whitty, 'Securing the future of postgraduate education' in L. Coiffait (ed) *Blue Skies: New thinking about the future of higher education*, London: Pearson; 2011.



# *University motivations for PGT education*

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- Broadening and deepening of knowledge dissemination activities
- Preparation of students for research
- Financial
- Presentation of courses in a less highly regulated environment

Can/will universities acknowledge the imperative of establishing transparent approaches to:

- quality assurance
- costing/pricing?

# *National motivations to support PGT education*

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- Meeting national needs in professional education
- Meeting industrial/commercial needs in specialist training
- Further raising educational levels to societal benefit

# *Critical questions*

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- Will postgraduate education become the new frontier in fair access/widening participation?
- Can/will universities acknowledge the imperative of establishing transparent approaches to:
  - quality assurance
  - costing/pricing?
- Should we acknowledge the societal as well as the personal benefit of PGT? (and, if so, how?)