COLLEGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

AND THE ECONOMY

An empirical study of the early careers of diversified degree graduates from colleges of higher education

Volume One of Two Volumes

by

JOHN BERNARD HARLAND

Thesis submitted

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of York

Department of Education

June 1984

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are extended to my supervisors, Ian Lewis and Graham Vulliamy, for their many valuable suggestions throughout my postgraduate studies and for their patience and understanding when times were difficult. My thanks are also due to my colleagues, Ian Gibbs and Sally Cree, for their encouragement, unswerving support and good advice.

I am grateful to the Social Science Research Council and the Combined Colleges Research Group for providing me with the opportunities to read for a higher degree and to conduct the research upon which the thesis is based.

Finally, I am indebted to the many college staff and graduates, too numerous to mention, who gave up their time to make themselves available for interviews, to complete questionnaires, to arrange fieldwork visits, and to read and comment on the early drafts of the study. Their co-operation is much appreciated.

ABSTRACT

The study portrays the early career experiences and attitudes of non-teaching degree graduates from colleges of higher education and examines some of the emerging theoretical and policy-orientated implications. Adopting a methodological approach that facilitates a juxtapositioning of quantitative and qualitative data, the research is based on three phases of fieldwork: interviews with academic staff at six former colleges of education; analyses of first destination statistics for 1979 graduates from eighteen colleges of higher education; and a follow-up postal survey of these graduates, thirty months after they had left their colleges.

The results establish that teaching constituted the main employment outlet and that among those who used their degrees to enter alternative occupations, significant proportions showed signs of 'filtering down the market' to jobs unaccustomed to graduate entry, notably secretarial and clerical work. Respondents in such jobs, mainly women, frequently expressed dissatisfaction with their work, for which many appeared to be overqualified and underemployed.

Locating the findings in the context of sociological theories of education and the economy, technical-functionalism and a neo-Marxist 'correspondence' thesis are found to be remiss in providing a plausible explanatory account of the educational provision in question. The data

are then used to modify a more promising neo-Weberian conflict theory, mainly by accentuating a technical rather than a normative relation between economic and educational processes.

Considering general policy implications for higher education, it is argued that good grounds exist for widening the distribution of higher order occupational tasks and for integrating institutions offering advanced further education into a single comprehensive system. In view of this, and the limited occupational transferability associated with diversified degree programmes, it is suggested that colleges should develop BEd and other vocational courses as distinctive forms of diversification, rather than replicating the established provision of general degree courses in the liberal arts.

INTRODUCTION

In 1970, institutions known as 'colleges of education' were almost single-mindedly concerned with the task of providing courses in initial teacher training and education. By 1980, after a decade of numerous closures and amalgamations, most of the surviving institutions had adopted the titles, 'college of higher education' or 'institute of higher education'. Reflecting their new found status, in addition to providing teaching degrees, the colleges were also offering first degrees, usually in the humanities and social sciences, and more vocationally-orientated training courses for occupations other than teaching (e.g. social work, occupational therapy).

This broadening of the colleges' curricula beyond that of a monotechnic concern with teaching was widely referred to as 'diversification'. The introduction of non-BEd and occupationally-unspecific degree courses amounted to the most prevalent form of diversification and in the college curricula parlance, they quickly became known as the 'diversified degree programmes' (e.g. BA, BSc, BHum degrees). It is these courses which constitute the focus of the present inquiry.

In proposing and planning the implementation of the diversified degree programmes, the official documents (Department of Education and

Science 1972b, 1973, 1974) gave scant attention to the question of whether or not such courses had any economic or employment relevance. In order to gain approval for the introduction of the new courses, colleges were not required to provide evidence that the programmes would be able to hold out to students encouraging prospects of finding suitable employment. Neither were they obliged to establish that the programmes incorporated a relevance which would make them responsive to unfilled gaps in employers' demands for highly qualified personnel. As a result, hardly any empirical evidence on the prospective or retrospective employment orientations of the diversified degree programmes has been marshalled and very little discussion of the associated policy issues has been presented in the existing literature.

As one of its main objectives, the thesis was intended to remedy part of this deficiency. Additionally, because any analysis of the economic relevance of educational provisions requires a plausible underlying theory of the relations between economic and educational processes, the case of the employment orientations of the diversified degree programmes afforded a valuable opportunity to assess available explanatory models and explore the need and scope for theoretical advancement. Moreover, because the sociological literature on the interface between education and the economy has lacked a recent empirically-based account of graduates' early careers, the need to redress this ommision constituted another important reason for conducting research in this area. Consequently, there appeared to be sound sociological, theoretical and policy-orientated grounds for collecting and interpreting empirical evidence relating to the initial careers of graduates of the colleges' diversified degree programmes.

Seeking to formulate theoretical and policy propositions in the light of the empirical data relating to the case in question, an attempt has been made to apply a methodological approach similar to that described by Fay (1975) as the 'critical model of social science'. The facet of this model that has received particular emphasis here involves the attempt to juxtapose participants' interpretive accounts with the concomitant variations between external constructs pre-selected by the researcher. In a slightly different sense, this has meant the balancing of qualitative with quantitative data, as well as the interweaving of individual meanings and intentions with an appreciation of the constraints and structures which influence them.

Adopting this approach, the study of the relations between the diversified curricula and economic processes is based on findings derived from three main phases of data collection and interpretation: interviews with academic staff at six colleges of higher education; the first destination statistics and other biographical details concerning the 1979 diversified degree graduates from eighteen colleges of higher education; and a post-graduation survey of 1979 diversified degree graduates from sixteen colleges of higher education. The bulk of the empirical material upon which the current analysis is based consists of the findings which arose out of the survey part of the research project.

With regard to graduates from former colleges of education, the research findings described in the central chapters reveal that the teaching profession remained the main economic contribution of the

diversified degree programmes, that a notable share of the sample was 'filtering down' the labour market to jobs unaccustomed to graduate entry (e.g. secretarial and clerical work), and that graduates in such lower status occupations were frequently dissatisfied as a result of being overqualified and underemployed. In comparison to graduates from other sectors of higher education, including the proto-polytechnic type of college of higher education, graduates from the former colleges of education displayed greater difficulties in obtaining professional employment compatible with, but outside of, the teaching profession.

Reinforcing many of Bone's (1980) observations on the effects of teacher training cuts on women's opportunities, finding satisfying and suitable alternatives to teaching proved particularly difficult for female graduates, who together comprised a significant majority in the colleges' student constituency. Following this latter perspective, one important interpretation sees the whole study as highlighting the harshness of an economic structure and socialization process which continues to restrict the opportunities for women to perform interesting and challenging work tasks which make real demands of the general skills and abilities they have acquired through extended education.

The findings also confirm that the majority of diversified degree students in the former colleges of education came from middle class families, had lower 'A' level grades than their university counterparts, and registered for degrees which combined subjects in the arts and social sciences. Apart from a few atypical exceptions, the career and employment trends displayed by these respondents were common

to graduates of all subject specialisms and combinations. Similarly, the research findings failed to establish any immediately recognizable employment advantages to be gained from careers education or work experience components. The graduates of the main institution initiating such a scheme were among the least successful in terms of salaries, level of employment, and satisfaction with jobs obtained and degree currency.

The view that the skills acquired in their degree courses had a direct relevance to their occupational performance was largely restricted to graduates in the teaching profession or jobs of a corresponding status. However, the vast majority of respondents, mainly irrespective of occupational circumstances, considered that employers used degrees as indicators of a high level of general intelligence and capacities. From a retrospective viewpoint, graduates' accounts suggested that they typically sought both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards from higher education and a very similar combination of expectations was associated with their attitudes towards work and employment. Most indicated a preference for stimulating work, especially of a caring altruistic kind, which would offer more than just instrumental rewards. A strong emphasis on the priority of intrinsic liberal education values was also very evident in staff accounts of the college curricula and its relation to economic and employment needs.

In view of such findings, it is believed that the information provided by the research could make a useful contribution to filling the gap in the existing literature relating to knowledge of the early

careers and attitudes of diversified degree graduates from colleges of higher education. Not only is such data held to be essential for a rational appraisal by government and college authorities of past and future diversification policies, but the accounts and experiences presented in the study should also prove helpful in improving the quality of decision making and attitude formation for large numbers of prospective applicants to higher education institutions.

As will be outlined in the review of the relevant literature (Chapter One), the only alternative source of information on the employment orientation of diversified degree programmes is to be found in the colleges' own annual compilation of first destination statistics (e.g. Association of Careers Advisers in Colleges of Higher Education 1979). Valuable as these are, like their corresponding publications from other sectors of higher education, they only provide a very basic classification of occupational circumstances up to a limited period of six months after graduation. The research reported here is seen as extending these sources by offering a wider range of more detailed data over a much longer period of time than that covered by first destination surveys.

While previous analyses have usefully focused on other aspects of diversification in the colleges (Adelman and Gibbs 1979, Locke 1979, Locke and Russell 1979, Lynch 1979, Pratt et al 1979, Stodd 1980), none have thus far included an examination of the career dimensions of the new programmes. Hence, it is intended that the present study will complement these publications by investigating an important but neglected element of the colleges' curricula. Furthermore, although

the study's sample is a restricted and specialized one, it is also intended that the analysis should have a wider relevance in so far as it engages a number of general themes arising from the two major surveys of graduates from the main sectors of higher education (Kelsall et al 1970, Williamson 1981). Likewise, by providing a detailed portrayal of graduates' actual career achievements and experiences, it is hoped that the study will produce some interesting points of contact and comparison with the research currently being conducted by the Brunel cross-sector project, 'Expectations of Higher Education'.

In addition to offering an empirical account of the topic, the thesis is also intended to make a contribution to the relevant sociological theorizing, which in recent years has tended to neglect the transition from higher education into work. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven, the data for the only major sociological work in this area (Kelsall et al 1972) is somewhat out of date and more recent studies have tended to present a seemingly atheoretical and purley empirical approach (e.g. Williamson 1981). Accordingly, while the transition from secondary schooling into work has received considerable attention from sociologists of education (e.g. Willis 1977, Corrigan 1979), the corresponding transition from higher education has not attracted a single empirically-based investigation from a contemporary sociology of education perspective. Thus, by way of drawing attention to the need for the topic of graduates' early careers to be placed on the agenda in the sociology of education, substantial sections of the concluding chapters are focused on the theoretical and sociological dimensions of the problem.

Reflecting the concern to contextualize the findings in the sociological theorizing of the education-economy interface, the empirical details of the particular case of higher education provision are seen as providing a fitting opportunity to assess the explanatory power and applicability of some salient theories of economy-education relations. Accordingly, the plausibilities of three such theories, technical-functionalism (Clark 1962, Banks 1968), a neo-Marxist 'correspondence' theory (Bowles and Gintis 1976) and a neo-Weberian conflict theory (Collins 1972), are evaluated in the light of their capacity to account for the characteristics evident in the case of the early careers experiences of the diversified degree graduates.

It is contended that, although there was evidence of a functional affinity between the skills acquired through higher education and certain graduate status jobs, notably teaching, several key features of the case ran counter to the central tenets of technical-functionalism. One important discrepancy consisted of the theory's inability to provide a satisfactory explanation of the very conspicuous mis-match between the abundant supply of the type of graduate produced by the new programmes and the limited employment demand for them.

The Bowles and Gintis thesis encountered similar difficulties in offering a convincing account of the data. In addition to failing to explain various misalignments between the educational provision in question and economic processes, the neo-Marxist model was found to be remiss in supplying an adequate account of graduates' prevailing

interpretation of employers' use of credentials as symbols of cognitive rather than non-cognitive traits.

Because it establishes a more persuasive model of the inflationary nature of credentialism and shifts the process of mediation between economic forces and educational institutions to an indirect channel through the labour market and the demand for mobility opportunity, the neo-Weberian conflict theory advanced by Collins is considered to be more in accordance with the relevant empirical material. However, some significant discontinuities were also apparent. It is argued that, inter alia, the theory clashes with the data in so far as it maintains that individuals are principally motivated towards extrinsic rewards, that credentials are used for their normative significance, and that the main task of educational establishments is to teach status cultures rather than cognitive skills. As a result of these differences, a number of theoretical proposals, which modify the neo-Weberian model in the light of the research findings, are postulated. In the main, these proposals are centred on recognizing the priority of cognitive aspects in educational curricula and qualifications and appreciating the importance attached to intrinsic, as well as instrumental, intentions in the demand for extended education and satisfying employment.

Consistent with the lack of empirical data and sociological analyses relating to the subject, the discussion of the policy and curricula issues surrounding the employment relevance of diversification has so far only received an extremely sketchy and cursory treatment in the available literature. Successive government

reports and white papers have only included one or two paragraphs which touch on the subject (Committee on Higher Education 1963, Department of Education and Science 1972a & 1972b); DES circulars setting out the procedures for inaugurating diversification hardly mention any employment considerations (Department of Education and Science 1973 & 1974); and only a handful of papers and articles include references to the topic and when they do, in most cases they usually allude to the lack of economic demand for non-technical degree graduates (Hampson 1977, Murray 1978, Catto et al 1981). Consequently, it is hoped that, by extracting a number of tentative policy-orientated proposals from the research findings, the thesis can go some way to meeting the pressing need for a more open and informed debate of the colleges' diversified role in the context of the overall provision of higher education.

Since it is necessary to review the specific policy implications for the colleges in the context of an examination of any repercussions the results may entail for higher education in general, before considering the former, the discussion centres on the wider significance of two particular problems which pervade the research findings. Representing crucial issues confronting future policy formation in higher education and the graduate labour market, the two selected problems are the continuing oversupply of graduates in non-applied subjects and the increasing hierarchization between different sectors of higher education. Following a brief assessment of alternative corrective measures, two possible solutions to the respective problems are suggested, namely, a broadening of the number and distribution of occupational tasks demanding discretionary work and

the integration of the various sectors offering advanced further education into a comprehensive system of higher education. These proposals are postulated as providing the long-term strategies in which the colleges should conceive their more immediate formation of policy and curricula development.

In particular, given that the diversified degree programmes were found to be heavily reliant on teaching as the main employment outlet and showed only a limited amount of transferability to other compatible occupations, it is contended that the colleges could be better placed to make a more distinctive contribution to initial teacher education and achieve greater occupational transferability, by offering three or four year BA (Education) degrees rather than by duplicating the provision of general degrees in the liberal arts. Secondly, in view of the new programmes' dubious employment and economic contribution, the colleges could strengthen their responsiveness to economic needs and their fulfilment of student expectations, by concentrating more of their resources in the occupationally-specific form of diversification, especially in areas of work attractive to women students. In the event of integration with larger and perhaps more prestigious institutions of higher education, it is thought that teacher training degrees and other vocational courses would be more likely to provide the colleges with distinctive areas of specialist provision than the current diversified degree programmes. It is also concluded that careers education schemes seem unlikely to extend the employment performance of diversified degree graduates to any significant extent, though in the short-term they may

prove to be of considerable assistance in helping graduates prepare and adjust to the prevailing conditions of the labour market.

Having outlined the nature of the empirical, theoretical and policy-related contribution intended for the thesis, a brief overview of its structure seems appropriate. After presenting general details and an historical background to the institutions in question, Chapter One contains an outline of the issues to be addressed by the research and a review of the literature relating to the associated policy implications and trends in the wider graduate labour market. (The literature relevant to the theoretical dimension is surveyed in Chapter Seven.) Chapter Two identifies the adopted methodological approach, summarizes the context in which the research was carried out, and describes the methods and techniques used in the data collection and analysis.

The research findings are presented and interpreted in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six. Chapter Three offers an overview of lecturers' accounts of the college curricula's relevance to employment. Chapter Four examines the first destination details of 1979 graduates, as a way of laying the foundations for a more extensive look at their subsequent careers in the following chapters. Hence, the early career experiences and attitudes of respondents to the 'Beyond Graduation' survey are set out in Chapter Five and then subjected to closer crosstabulation analysis in Chapter Six, where an attempt is made to examine the factors which appeared to influence graduates' patterns of employment.

Chapter Seven is devoted to an exploration of the theoretical dimensions of the study and concludes by offering a number of proposals as a contribution towards the construction of an adequate explanatory model. The final chapter summarizes the main findings and discusses their implications for the policy issues raised in the opening chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMIC RELEVANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ISSUES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Broad aims and approaches

By focusing on the early employment experiences of a group of graduates from a particular case of higher educational provision, the thesis seeks to examine the nature of the provision's relation and contribution to economic and occupational processes. As important parts of this broad aim, the study incorporates a consideration of certain policy implications for the particular provision concerned as well as an analysis of the plausibility of various sociological theories to account for the education-economy relations demonstrated by the case in question.

Although a main part of the impetus for such a study resides in the need for a more informed and open discussion of the policy issues inherent in the specific case, additional reasons for conducting the research originate in a wider concern for the economic relevance of higher education in general. Since the following pages concentrate on the specific details and background of the case in question, a brief impression of the type of wider concerns may illustrate, in a very general way, some of the arguments and assertions often expressed in

the public debate and rhetoric, which forms the backcloth to the present inquiry.

A pivotal and widespread assumption which has traditionally underscored the provision of advanced further education is the belief that, whatever else it should do, higher education should make a positive contribution to the economic well-being of society. In declaring such, it is often proposed that benefits to the economic structure should be derived, not only from higher education's research function, but from its teaching function as well. Consequently, according to this view, the 'products' of higher education should, as a result of their extended learning, bring to their occupational performance, such qualities as creativity, specialist knowledge and advanced intellectual capabilities.

A question increasingly put is, 'In what ways, and to what extent is higher education accomplishing this task?' The reasons and anxieties lying behind such questions are articulated in a variety of forms and vocabularies.

For example, from a perspective of economic accountability, it is generally held that society can expect a contribution to economic prosperity in return for its considerable investment of public funds in the higher education service. For many, the expected economic benefits represent the most convincing justification for maintaining the allocation of large amounts of public subsidies to higher education. Accordingly, if the economic returns argument is abandoned, say, for example, by postulating higher education solely as an opportunity for

personal growth or as an alternative to unemployment, then, according to one line of argument, the rational grounds for subsidizing higher education are no more nor less valid than the arguments for subsidizing a whole range of cultural activities currently purchased by private individuals, such as evening classes, adventure camps, holidays and social clubs.

A similar assertion is voiced in concern over the alleged need for advanced further education to be more responsive to the requirements of scientific and technological progress. Thus, it is frequently contested that, in order to sustain a rate of technological development commensurate with that of foreign competitors, productive enterprises require workers who have acquired, and can apply, aspects of certain areas of knowledge, which are presently housed, developed and transmitted in institutions of higher education. During recent years, the view has constantly been expressed that graduates of higher education establishments in England and Wales are often dysfunctionally-orientated towards economic needs and technological requirements. Likewise, it is often stated that higher education is illattuned and insensitive to the requirements of our economic and occupational structures. At a popular level, much resentment can be heard over the large quantities of taxpayers' money spent on providing an elite and privileged middle class with the luxury of not having to work for three years, after which they collect the cream jobs, even though many are nothing more than 'bright ideas boys' or 'overeducated theorists' with scant notions of the realities of work and practical knowledge. In the political arena, over the past ten years, both of the major parties have emphasized - at least in speeches, if not in

deeds - the importance of increasing the occupational relevance and benefits to be derived from all levels of the education service, including the higher education sector.

Thirdly, in spite of the diminution in graduate opportunities in recent years, the vast majority of entrants to higher education establishments still seem to anticipate, whether consciously or tacitly, that the results of their advanced studies will enable them to offer employers an enhanced occupational performance for which they can reasonably expect additional material and psychological rewards. Certainly, the prospectuses of individual institutions and the literature published by graduate careers agencies continue to promote the view that the private returns for investment in higher education remain very attractive. By way of illustration, the 1983 report on the predicted demand for graduates published jointly by The Standing Conference of Employers of Graduates (SCOEG), The Association of Graduate Careers Advisers (AGCAS), and The Central Services Unit (CSU) concluded:

> ....The increasing complexity of many activities means that those with a high level of education have a great advantage in the search for employment, and this advantage over non-graduates is likely to continue. (Syrett 1983)

Notwithstanding these claims, scepticism over the purported employment benefits of higher education is more prevalent than hitherto and the recognition that a degree no longer guarantees entry to a high status profession is more apparent in popular conceptions. Consequently, prospective applicants may have to give greater care to assessing the extent to which higher education can deliver the enhanced

career prospects it alleges to offer.

In addition to improving the efficiency of productive enterprises, for some commentators, a more widespread provision of higher education encapsulates the prospect of widening the equality of opportunity within the sphere of economic organizations. It is maintained that only in the context of a direct and constructive interrelation between higher education and the economy, does it appear plausible that institutions of higher education have a major contribution to make towards constructing a fairer economic and social structure.

Finally, a further expression of the problematic nature of higher education's relation to the economy is evident in the large body of literature dealing with sociological conceptualizations of the economy-education interface, much of which would challenge the theoretical assumptions underpinning some of the perspectives previously mentioned. After a short period in which the analyzing of educational processes in relation to economic forces went out of fashion, the latter half of the last decade saw an upsurge in the number of publications concerned with education-economy theorizing. However, as an indication of the dissension in this area of theorizing, the outcome of this renewed attention has not led to the acceptance of an explanatory model which commands consensus approval but the proliferation of a wide diversity of contrasting accounts and approaches.

Consequently, it is assumed that, in view of the doubts and questions surrounding its social and private returns, its efficiency and equity, its policy implications and theoretical underpinnings, the relation of higher education to economic processes constitutes a major social problem, which urgently requires additional research and analysis.

Reflecting the priority given to this assumption, the focus of this study is predominantly, though not exclusively, concerned with the economic relevance of higher education rather than the intrinsic benefits and cultural enrichment for its recipients. In economist's terms, the principal concern is with 'education as investment' rather than 'education as consumption', although aspects of the latter arise at various points in the study. It is certainly not being suggested that intrinsic outcomes are of little importance in higher education, only that, in the opinion of the author, issues surrounding economic and employment relevance, with their associated policy and theoretical complications, are currently more urgent and problematic than those of consumption.

In considering how to render this very general topic more precise and manageable, at least three different types of approach to the problem can be identified in the literature. The most prevalent and methodologically -developed approach is that of the 'human capital' school of educational economists. Applying a costs-benefits framework, this perspective attempts to quantify the private and social returns on different types of investment in higher education. In the case of social returns, this approach typically uses gross earnings as a

measure of social benefits, on the assumption that earnings signify the value of a worker's marginal productivity. Examples of the 'rates of return' method can be found in Morris (1973), Woodhall (1973) and Ziderman (1973).

Citing the ubiquitous imperfections in the wage-labour market which invalidate the 'income as value of productivity' principle and the intractable difficulties of quantifying economic benefits, Berg (1970) provides an alternative and more direct method of analyzing graduates' contribution to economic productivity. Recognizing the difficulties involved in measuring standards of occupational performance, Berg, by examining such data as productivity rates, absenteeism and job satisfaction, contrasts the actual job performances of graduates and non-graduates in identical or similar jobs.

As a third approach, general indications of the nature and extent of graduates' economic benefits and contributions can be gained from an examination of surveys of graduates' early career and employment patterns. For instance, valuable inferences concerning the economic relevance of different academic disciplines are provided in Tarsh's (1982) analysis of graduate unemployment rates six months after graduation. Offering similar indications from labour market trends, Williamson (1981) covers a much longer time scale and includes a greater range of relevant data.

The present study has adopted the latter type of perspective. Accordingly, data on the early careers of a particular case of graduates have been used to extract and interpret a variety of signals.

to the quality of the degree courses' relevance to occupational and economic needs. An important advantage of this approach is the scope it allows for the study to combine a range of 'objective' behavioural indices (e.g. unemployment rates, occupational areas entered, status and levels of employment, sectors of employment, salaries and so on) with a variety of 'subjective' attitudinal items (e.g. job satisfaction, evaluations of degree currency, career aspirations etc.). As a result of incorporating behavioural and attitudinal elements, this perspective facilitates qualitative and sociological dimensions, which are usually lacking in the quantitative and largely income-based rates of return method. Furthermore, in contrast to the methods developed by Berg, the early careers approach possesses the advantage of including, not only those in full-time employment, but a full cross-section of graduates' career experiences (e.g. housewives, temporary workers, the unemployed and so on).

Admittedly, the early careers perspective is arguably less direct and more inferential than the other two approaches, but it should be stressed that the two alternatives both depend on fundamental assumptions and inferences. A similar limitation on the method adopted here, is that it does not allow for any reasonably direct analyses of actual job performances, such as those carried out by Berg. Initially, it was hoped to overcome this weakness by supplementing the early careers survey with follow-up interviews of respondents and their employers, during which the subject of actual job performance would have been a major topic. Unfortunately, neither time nor resources permitted such an extension to the research, although, as a compromise,

a sufficient number of respondents volunteered written comments on their job performance to allow an indirect analysis of the skills level demanded by various occupations.

Finally, it must be conceded that, in comparison to the life-long age-earnings profiles common to many rates of return analyses, the time-span feasible in early careers approaches is short. Notwithstanding this weakness, it is believed that the time-scale covered by the present survey (i.e. thirty months after graduation) is sufficient to allow a comparative assessment of graduates' employment and occupational standing. On balance, although the early careers survey approach is not without shortcomings, its strengths, particularly its scope for embracing quantitative and qualitative data across the full spectrum of career patterns, are considerable and well-suited to the purposes of the present study.

Non-teaching graduates from colleges of higher education

The special focus for the research centres upon the BA/BSc graduates - sometimes referred to as the diversified degree or non-BEd graduates - from colleges and institutes of higher education. As outlined below, there are several reasons why this group of graduates constitutes an interesting case sui generis, but in addition to this, they also exhibit a significance for a wider group of graduates. While appreciating that the characteristics of this particular group of graduates are sufficiently unique as to preclude simple generalizations to a broader population, it is considered that interpretations and

explanations arising from the particular case in question engender important continuities and implications for a more general class of graduates.

Precise classifications of 'colleges and institutes of higher education' are unavailable, but according to the 1982 'Handbook of degree and advanced courses' published by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (Central Register and Clearing House 1982), sixty-three such institutions qualified for inclusion in the section covering colleges and institutes. All but three of these sixty-three institutions were also included in the 1982 'Guide to The Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education' published by The Standing Conference of Principals and Directors of Colleges and Institutes in Higher Education (1982).

Largely through the auspices of this latter organization, the colleges and institutes of higher education have taken some steps towards presenting a collective identity. It would, however, be mistaken to think of them as a homogeneous group. For the purposes of this study, it has proved useful to distinguish three different types of colleges and institutes of higher education.

As indicated in Table 1.1, the largest category (labelled A in the Table) are the voluntary and maintained colleges which have diversified, either as free-standing institutions, or through amalgamations with other colleges of education, from a teacher training base. The thirty-nine colleges and institutes of higher education of this type are referred to here as 'former colleges of education'.

Table 1.1 The Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education

A FORMER COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Institutions which diversified from a teacher training base <a>
- sometimes through amalgamation with another college of education.

Institution	V. <c>	N. <d>	Institution	V. <c>	N. <d>
(i) Voluntary			(ii) LEA Maintained		
Bishop Grosseteste <ab>	U	500	Avery Hill <a>	C	700
Chester	U	1000	Bangor Normal <b>	U	400
Christ Church	U	850	Bath	C/U	990
De La Salle	U	900	Bretton Hall	U	750
Homerton	U	700	Bulmershe	C	1000
King Alfred's	C	1100	Charlotte Mason <a>	U	300
La Sainte Union	U	650	City of Liverpool	U	1100
Liverpool Institute	U	1500	City of Manchester	U	1000
Newman <a>	U	640	Crewe & Alsager	C	1600
Roehampton	U	2500	Edge Hill	U	1300
Ripon & York St. John	U	1550	Hertfordshire	C	700
St. Mark & St. John	C	650	Ilkley	C/U	800
S. Martin's	U	730	Matlock	U	450
St. Mary's Fenham	C	320	Nonington	U	300
St. Mary's Twickenham	U	1200	North Riding <a>	U	350
St. Paul & St. Mary	C	1250	Rolle	U	500
Trinity & All Saints	U	900	West Midlands	C	800
Trinity Carmarthen	U	450	Worcester	C	1000
Westhill <a>	U	530			
Westminster	C	400			
West Sussex	C	1000			
TOTAL		19,320	TOTAL		14,040

NOTES

<a> Colleges so marked have not diversified to the point of providing non-teaching first degree programmes, though they may offer diplomas in non-teaching subjects.

<b> Apart from these, all the other institutions shown in the Table were included in the 1982 Guide to the Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education.

<c> Validating body: U = University; C = CNAA

<d> Approximate number of full-time students on AFE courses. The numbers are approximate because it is not clear from the source whether 'full-time' or 'full-time equivalent' figures are presented.

SOURCE: Central Register and Clearing House (1982)

Table 1.1 (Con't.) The Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education

B COMBINATION COLLEGES

Institutions including a college of education and a college of further education or art.

Institution	V. <c>	N. <d>
Bedford	C	1600
Bradford	C	2600
Bucks	C	1800
Chelmer	C	1300
Colchester <b>	C	2000
Derby Lonsdale	C/U	1500
Doncaster	C	2000
Dorset	C/U	1500
Gwent	U	1200
Hull	C	3000
Luton	C	1500
Nene	U	1400
New College, Durham	C	1500
North Cheshire	U	450
N.E. Wales	U	960
South Glamorgan	U	3600
West Glamorgan	U	900
West London	U	2500
TOTAL		31,310

C PROTO-POLYTECHNICS

Institutions not including initial teacher education courses.

Institution	V. <c>	N. <d>
Bolton	C	1000
Cambridgeshire CAT	C	2000
Ealing	C	2000
Harrow	C	1200
Slough	C	900
Southampton	C	1500
TOTAL		8,600

Overall Total: 73,270

NOTES

<a> Colleges so marked have not diversified to the point of providing non-teaching first degree programmes, though they may offer diplomas in non-teaching subjects.

<b> Apart from these, all the other institutions shown in the Table were included in the 1982 Guide to the Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education.

<c> Validating body: U = University; C = CNAA

<d> Approximate number of full-time students on AFE courses. The numbers are approximate because it is not clear from the source whether 'full-time' or 'full-time equivalent' figures are presented.

SOURCE: Central Register and Clearing House (1982)

In addition to providing BEd programmes, the majority of former colleges of education have diversified to the extent of offering BA/BSc first degree programmes; the few which have not, are identified in the Table.

A second category, here termed 'combination colleges' (B in Table 1.1), constitutes those colleges of education which joined forces with colleges of further education, or in some cases, colleges of art. Eighteen institutions fall within this category. A third group of colleges, possessing a technical or arts college tradition, offer no initial teacher education courses and have no links with colleges of education. The six institutions fitting this description have been labelled the 'proto-polytechnics' (C in Table 1.1).

It should be stressed that such terms as 'combination colleges' and 'proto-polytechnics' were adopted for no other purpose than ease of identification throughout this study. Institutions were assigned to these categories according to the nature of any recent amalgamations and whether or not they incorporated teacher training courses. Consequently, the meaning of the terms are entirely limited to these criteria and no prescriptive connotations regarding the status of the institutions are intended.

In order to extend the study's scope for comparative analysis, a small number of combination colleges and proto-polytechnics have been included in the research, but the major concern has concentrated upon the type of college of higher education here referred to as former colleges of education, especially those which have diversified into

BA/BSc first degree programmes. Without wishing to replicate the valuable existing historical accounts of this type of institution (e.g. Dent 1977, Hencke 1978, Lynch 1979), a brief summary of the background to its recent emergence may prove helpful to readers unfamiliar with this sector of higher education.

Historical background

Although the earliest teacher training establishments in England and Wales date from the very beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not until the middle of that century that systematic teacher training appeared on a significant scale. By 1850 there were over thirty teacher training colleges, most of which were residential and Anglican Foundations. Several commentators have noted that many of the problems that have vexed training colleges throughout their long history can be traced to the original qualities and values assimilated by these founding institutions (Hencke 1978, Lynch 1979). These have included: the absence of a claim to a university tradition or connection, which evoked and perpetuated an image of the colleges as the poor relation of post-secondary education, despite the colleges' imitation of university architecture and trappings; education's lack of academic respectability as a discipline of knowledge; a shortage of students with high levels of intellectual calibre; and curricula which attempted to combine personal education with a craft apprenticeship approach to professional training.

Usually adopting the Anglican model, various voluntary organizations established more colleges throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century; and when, following the 1902 Education Act, local education authorities opened their own colleges, they too, by and large, followed a similar pattern. The expansion of teacher training colleges which followed the entry of local authorities into the field, though slow at first, was eventually so extensive that by 1960, there were approximately one hundred and fifty colleges. Only a third were run by voluntary bodies, the remainder were local authority maintained.

During this period of development, entry to the teaching profession was typically through one of three routes: college certificates based on two years concurrent training, one year consecutive training in a University Education Department following graduation, or untrained graduate entrants from universities. In terms of obtaining employment, academic achievements were superior to craft-based skills and the cream of teaching appointments generally went to university graduates, who were often untrained, in preference to college trained applicants. With the greater involvement of secular government in all aspects of educational provision, including teacher training, the criticisms of the low academic standards of many colleges received stronger political support, and a succession of reports were commissioned to inquire into the state of teacher training.

In an effort to improve the academic credibility of colleges, the Burnham Committee recommended in 1925 that colleges should develop closer ties with universities, which would assume responsiblity for

validating the colleges' two-year training certificates. In 1942, the Government set up the McNair Committee, but this failed to reach agreement on vital issues concerning the colleges' future development. Half the committee wished to see all teacher training establishments integrated into a single administrative system under the universities. The other half recommended that, by placing them both under the auspices of area training services, the individual identities of colleges and university education departments shoud be preserved. Integration was rejected and future development reflected a compromise of the two alternative proposals.

After the Second World War, the colleges experienced two waves of rapid expansion. In response to the post-war bulge in the birth rate, the raising of the school leaving age to fifteen in 1947, and expansion of secondary modern schools, the first wave involved the establishment of emergency training colleges by local education authorities. Following a brief oversupply of teachers in the mid-1950s, when as a way of avoiding closures and improving standards, the two year course was extended to three, in 1960 a second phase of expansion began. This phase was precipitated by an increase in the birth rate from 1957, coupled with a realization that there would be insufficient higher education places available to accommodate the immediate post-war generation then approaching university entry age. It was against this background that, in 1961, a committee under the chairmanship of Lord Robbins was charged with the task of examining the capacity of the entire higher education provision to meet future national needs.

In an effort to improve the academic standing of the colleges, the Robbins Report (Committee on Higher Education 1963) recommended a change of name from 'training colleges' to 'colleges of education', the introduction of a four year BEd degree which would be compatible in standards with the BA degree, and the establishment of Schools of Education, under which the colleges would enjoy closer links with universities without sacrificing their independence and links with local education authorities. The latter recommendation was not implemented. It also advocated a large increase in the colleges' student intake, as well as a general commitment to opening up higher education access to a predominantly working class 'reserve of untapped ability'. With regard to these latter proposals, from the early sixties through to the mid-seventies the colleges substantially increased their student numbers and research suggests that, relative to the universities, the college constituency contained a higher proportion of students from working class backgrounds (Halsey et al 1980). During this period, for many such students, the colleges of education provided an avenue of occupational and social mobility, which they would have found difficult to obtain elsewhere.

In spite of Robbins' encouraging recommendations and the second wave of expansion, the latter half of the 1960s witnessed a mounting store of problems for the colleges. The post-Robbins compromises failed to dispel the continuing tensions over academic status between the universities and colleges; the precarious position of the colleges was shaken still further by the designation of thirty polytechnics and the consequent creation of a binary system of higher education; the birth rate began to fall - thus starting a trend which would have a

profound impact on the colleges in the mid-seventies; and searching questions were being widely raised about the quality of the colleges' curricula. Amidst growing criticisms of the lack of coherence in the BEd degree and unity between subject specialists and professional training, a Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Science (see Willey and Maddison 1971) recommended a major inquiry into the organization of teacher training.

In December 1970, the Secretary of State for Education, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Lord James of Rusholme to look into the future of teacher training. In addition to examining the organization of courses and the roles of all higher education institutions vis-a-vis teacher training, the committee was specifically requested to consider:

> whether a large proportion of intending teachers should be educated with students who have not chosen their careers or have chosen other careers; (Department of Education and Science 1972a, p.iii)

The James Report (DES 1972a), published in February 1972, proposed a novel, but inevitably contentious, teacher education scheme consisting of three cycles. In an effort to terminate the tensions between subject specialisms and professional training, Cycle 1 would consist of a two-year Diploma in Higher Education at a college of education (first proposed as a two-year degree) or a three year university or polytechnic first degree; Cycle 2 would provide a two-year period of pre-service professional training and induction, after which a BA (Education) would be awarded; Cycle 3 entailed a planned programme of in-service training and professional development.

As far as the colleges were concerned, the crucial feature of Cycle 1 was that students who intended to become teachers would study for the Diploma in Higher Education along side other students who could proceed to take a first degree or enter alternative careers.

Reactions to the Report were mixed but in general, perhaps predictably, the three cycle teacher education scheme did not gain widespread approval. The Government's response was delivered in a White Paper, 'Education: A Framework for Expansion' (DES 1972b), published in December 1972 by the Secretary of State for Education, Mrs Margaret Thatcher. While accepting the objectives of an expansion in in-service provision (Cycle 3) and the progressive achievement of an all-graduate teaching profession, the White Paper rejected Cycle 2 on the grounds that it allowed insufficient time for teaching practice. It gave guarded support for the introduction of the DipHE, but subsequently neither potential students nor employers appear to have been attracted to this qualification.

Following Hencke (1978), it is arguable that if the James committee had explicitly addressed the really crucial, but at the time not widely appreciated, difficulties facing the colleges - namely, the falls in the birth rate and its consequential drop in demand for teachers - the response to the Report could have been very different. Although several features of the James Report implicitly assumed the probability of a fall in the demand for teachers, it contained no detailed and explicit analysis of manpower forecasts for trained teachers. This represented an astonishing omission, especially since officials from the DES, the main public body not to support the setting

up of this inquiry, had already intimated, albeit reluctantly, that in terms of the future demand for teachers, the colleges looked to be seriously overcommitted. Hencke (1978) has maintained that, not only were the James committee aware of the likely problems in teacher employment, but their draft report contained a chapter which presented details of the impending oversupply of newly trained teachers. Such information would have strengthened the arguments for using any spare capacity that might exist in the colleges to improve and extend the overall period of teacher training and to diversify into the field of non-teaching degrees and diplomas. This chapter, however, never appeared in the final version - perhaps because of a disagreement between the DES and the committee over the policy implications arising from it - and the public remained largely unaware of the seriousness of the potential mis-match between teacher supply and demand. Hencke (1978) writes:

> One can only speculate on the response the James Report might have had from the same organizations which criticized the proposals if the figures had been known publicly at the time. What happened was that hostile public opinion, which had not been given a true picture, turned against the majority of the James proposals. This reaction resulted in a delay until the Department had worked out its policies to be published in the White Paper. (Hencke 1978, p.46)

The Government's policy responses to the decline in the birth rate were stated in the 1972 White Paper and the circulars (DES 1973 & 1974) which followed it. As a result of negotiations between the DES, local authorities and voluntary bodies, some colleges would close completely, some would be absorbed by, or amalgamated with, other institutions of higher education, some would remain monotechnics (i.e. only offering teaching degrees), others would be allowed to diversify

and develop into free-standing 'major institutions of higher education' offering first degree programmes ostensibly unrelated to teacher training. Notwithstanding a few brief references to educational objectives, such as the capacity for students to defer their commitment to teaching (DES 1974), the Government provided little overall guidance and coherence for the emergence of these 'major institutions' (Locke and Russell 1979, Locke 1979) and few doubt that the policies were more financially and politically motivated than educationally inspired.

For the Government, this approach achieved the closure of several institutions at a time of growing financial stringency, it pre-empted full-scale opposition by offering the incentive of diversification to the larger colleges, which in turn avoided the political embarrassment which would have followed the draconian number of closures if some diversification had not been allowed. The policy of diversification into first degrees in general arts<1> subjects also increased the capacity of the higher education sector to provide sufficient places to meet the demand from the growing number of eighteen year olds, which would peak and then decline in the early 1980s. For the colleges, although severely reduced in number, they not only survived, but, in gaining the capacity to diversify into the arena of non-teaching degrees, they made a significant step forward in their long search to be recognized as a legitimate member of the family of higher education institutions.

The impact of these policies threw the colleges into a period of turmoil and trauma. After two rounds of closures and many institutional re-groupings, all of which are well documented in Hencke

(1978), Lynch (1979) and Locke and Russell (1979), during the second half of the decade the college of education sector gradually disappeared. In its place there emerged an important third sector and force within higher education in England and Wales. Aspiring to the status implied by the 1972 White Paper's phrase 'major institutions of higher education', the new institutions which were forged out of the reorganization of the colleges, in the absence of any directive from the DES, led the way in adopting for themselves and similar establishments the wording 'college of higher education' or 'institute of higher education'. With only a few of these institutions remaining monotechnic, the majority participated in the process of diversification and by the beginning of the academic year 1976, they were registering undergraduates on BA/BSc non-teaching degree programmes. The shift from an exclusive concentration on teacher education to diversified degree programmes was so extensive that by the close of the decade, many colleges of higher education had as many, if not more, BA/BSc than BEd students. Again in the absence of any Government initiatives, in order to provide a corporate identity and platform for the sector, in February 1978, the Standing Conference of Principals and Directors of Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education was formed. Membership consisted of higher education establishments, other than universities and polytechnics, in which a significant proportion of their courses had been validated at degree level. In terms of the definitions presented earlier, the 1981 membership indicated in Table 1.1, amounted to sixty institutions, including thirty-seven former colleges of education, seventeen combination colleges and six proto-polytechnics.

Derived from information presented in the 1982 NATFHE Handbook of Courses (Central Register and Clearing House 1982), Table 1.1 also shows that approximately 73,000 students were enrolled on full-time courses in the college of higher education sector. While 55,000 were on advanced further education (degree and degree level) courses, the remaining 18,000 students were on non-advanced further education courses, the vast majority of which were provided by the combination colleges (B in the Table) and proto-polytechnics (C in the Table). The 55,000 undergraduates on degree or degree level courses in the college of higher education sector represented 12 per cent of all full-time students in higher education in England and Wales. The corresponding percentages for polytechnics and universities were 32 and 56 per cent respectively. These figures give an indication of the comparative size of the college of higher education sector, but it should be noted that the numbers include undergraduates on teaching and non-teaching degree programmes. The attention of the present study centres upon the early career patterns of graduates from non-teaching degree programmes, predominantly but not exclusively, from the diversified former colleges of education within this sector.

Some initial empirical questions

Throughout and during the founding stages of the colleges of higher education, certain leading principals and colleges were convinced that a critical factor in securing the success of the diversified degree programmes was the extent to which they reflected and responded to the economic and employment needs of the country. For

example, in his opening address to the 'Higher Education: An Alternative Way' Conference (30.10.79), Mr J.V. Barnett, Chairman of the Standing Conference, emphasized the need for the new courses to be relevant to economic requirements and advocated:

> ...One of the challenges facing the colleges and institutes is whether they possess the imagination and resourcefulness to develop in particular new insights into the vocational preparation of the non-technical graduate whether employed in the public or private sector.

As another indication of the colleges' concern for the occupational outlets of their new graduates, under the aegis of the Standing Conference, the Association of Careers Advisers in Colleges of Education (ACACHE) was formed in order to promote college careers advisory services and to monitor the first destinations of their graduates. In 1979, approximately two thousand non-teaching degree graduates (e.g. BA/BSc) were believed to have left the colleges. Using coding and recording procedures identical to those used by universities and polytechnics, ACACHE (1979) mounted a pilot first destinations survey which covered about half of the 1979 graduates. On the basis of more comprehensive surveys, in 1980 ACACHE recorded 2,747 graduates with non-teaching degrees from the colleges of higher education, and by 1981, the corresponding total had risen to 3,409.

In order to prepare the way for an evaluation of the economic relevance and employment currency of the new programmes, a preliminary need existed to provide an accurate descriptive and empirical account of the early careers of non-teaching degree graduates from colleges and institutes of higher education which diversified from a tradition of

teacher training. Having surveyed the literature, it is believed that no comparable study is available in existing sources and publications.

The absence in the literature of a retrospective study of college graduates' careers is largely explained by the simple fact that the colleges did not produce a substantial output of non-teaching degree graduates until 1979. Consequently, without severely reducing the time scale allowed for graduates career patterns to emerge, an earlier version of the kind of study attempted here would scarcely have been possible. The sources of information closest to the present undertaking are the annual first destination statistics provided by ACACHE, which, like their counterparts from other sectors of higher education, perform the valuable but necessarily limited task of producing data on graduates' circumstances immediately after graduation. Although these sources, especially those relating to 1979 graduates, have been immensely valuable; it is intended that the present study, should extend the depth and scope of analysis beyond that made possible by first destination statistics alone.

In addition to the understandable absence of retrospective studies of college graduates' careers, the remaining literature also contains very few general references to the prospective employment orientations of diversified courses. Dent (1977), Hencke (1978), Lynch (1979), Russell and Pratt (1979), Campbell-Stewart (1980) and Gedge (1981) provide useful accounts of the development up to, and through, the process of diversification, but seldom and only tangentially do they comment on aspects relating to careers and employment.

Adelman and Gibbs (1979, 1980a & 1980b) provide an important case study of three former colleges of education which were among the first to offer a greater diversity of courses and programmes of study. The focus of their research was largely on the experience of undergraduates as they entered and progressed through their colleges, and on the changes to the colleges' organization and curricula. Although they present some interesting findings on students' early career aspirations, they had little to say about graduates' initial employment trends and were unable to follow their main cohort, based on the 1976 entry, after they had left college.

Studies by Locke & Russell (1979), Locke (1979), Pratt et al (1979) and Russell & Pratt (1979), although providing a useful overview of all colleges in this sector, remain essentially re-analyses of already published official statistics. Concentrating on the state of general policy formation during the period of diversification and amalgamations, they say little about the students' experience of these institutions, and even less about the career expectations and employment patterns of their graduates. A more recent study by McNamara and Ross (1982), included nine colleges in its sample of seventeen institutions. However, their survey was predominantly concerned with BEd students and only incidentally with diversified degree programmes. The cross-sector project, 'Expectations of Higher Education', currently in progress at Brunel University, will produce some information relevant to this area. However, its emphasis, as suggested by the project's title, is upon expectations, with no provision yet, as far as it is known, for matching these against subsequent realities.

From this brief review, it is evident that a descriptive and empirically-based account of the early careers of non-teaching degree graduates from colleges is not available in the existing literature. As a basis for addressing issues of economic relevance, it is hoped that the present study will go some way to remedy part of this deficiency. Consequently, having documented the main trends and patterns of graduates' early careers, the intention is to interrogate the empirical findings from the perspectives and priorities offered in the opening sections of this chapter. At an empirical level, the question addressed is, 'What indications of the economic contribution of diversified degrees emerge from the portrayal of college graduates' early careers?' More specifically, this raises such questions as:

1. As indications of economic contribution, what were the main early career and employment patterns displayed by the 1979 non-teaching degree graduates from colleges of higher education which diversified from a teacher training base?

2. As a further indication of economic contribution, at what levels of occupational status were these graduates finding employment?

3. Were there any sub-groups among these graduates whose early careers were markedly different from the rest of the group?

4. How did the early careers of these graduates compare with

graduates from other sectors of higher education?

5. To what extent were graduates satisfied with their degree currency and occupational circumstances?

6. Did the diversified degree appear to enhance the career prospects, employability and salaries of its holders?

7. How did members of the academic staff perceive their institutions' potential for contributing to the enhancement of their graduates' employability?

Important as they are, the answers to such questions have a wider significance than their purely intrinsic value. At one level, they engender important policy implications for the colleges' institutional and curricula development; at another level, they provide a useful basis for exploring available explanations of the wider and more general graduate labour market phenomena - explanations which in turn are also capable of informing policy decision making. Taking each of these levels in turn - policy implications and observations on the wider context - the remainder of this chapter delineates the areas of particular interest to the present inquiry.

Policy issues for the colleges

It is felt that the empirical material resulting from the research offers an opportunity for a review of policy in three main areas:

1. In view of the early career experiences of diversified degree graduates, would (a) the extending of the occupational relevance of teaching degree programmes or (b) the continued provision of non-teaching courses, represent the most efficient and resourceful method of giving the colleges the required stability to respond flexibly to a fluctuating demand for teachers?

2. Assuming the desirability of some provision of diversified courses, do the early career experiences of non-teaching graduates lend support to the strengthening of (a) liberal arts degree programmes or (b) more vocationally-specific courses?

3. Assuming the continued provision of diversified liberal arts degree programmes, do the results offer encouragement for any distinctive curricula innovations, such as careers education courses, which may enhance the economic relevance and marketability of college graduates?

A cursory glance at the recent development of these policy issues soon reveals the enormous influence the DES have wielded in

shaping their direction. Although it would be mistaken to conceive of the colleges' internal policy bodies as entirely passive; throughout the last decade, the DES constraints imposed on them have often been so restrictive that internal academic policy making has had very little room to manoeuvre. Several commentators have already noted that Government policy towards the colleges has frequently been characterized by fragmented and negative administrative constraints rather than constructive and integral planning (Hencke 1979, Locke 1979). In such a climate, policies regularly seemed to progress by default rather than by avowed intention and design. Although the above policy issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, it may be useful, at this point, to offer a brief outline of their recent background.

1. The decision to increase the flexibility of the colleges' output by introducing diversified programmes, as opposed to making the BEd less of a single occupation qualification, rested heavily on DES's fundamental assumption that a BEd non-teacher was a wasted resource, and by implication, that a BA/BSc non-teacher was a less wasteful resource. Effectively, it was assumed that, in periods of reduced demand for teachers, adding to the stock of arts and social science graduates, represents a more efficient use of resources than increasing the number of BEd graduates. Despite the importance of this point, in the official publications which precipitated the introduction of BA/BSc degrees in colleges, not only was there no analysis of this assumption, there was an almost total absence of any kind of reference to the potential employment outlets for the non-teaching degree graduates.

The most influential antecedent to the introduction of diversified degree courses was the Government's 1972 White Paper (DES 1972b). In proposing that some colleges should diversify their course offerings, it is interesting to note that the only indication of the possible employment orientations for the proposed new courses was the very vague reference to 'other professions':

> Some colleges either singly or jointly should develop.....into major institutions of higher education concentrating on the arts and human sciences, with particular reference to their application in teaching and other professions. (Department of Education & Science 1972b, p.44)

Likewise, in the two DES circulars 7/73 and 6/74 intended to implement the developments proposed in the White Paper (DES 1973 and 1974), no further guidelines on employment orientations were offered and, moreover, in setting out their criteria for assessing local authority plans for developing the colleges, no mention was made of the need to evaluate whether or not an employment demand existed for graduates of diversified courses. This is a curious omission, particularly since both of the major political parties have increasingly proclaimed their commitment to the criteria of economic relevance in the planning of higher education. Why then should such an important policy document so conspicuously ignore the employment implications of the courses they proposed?

A closer reading of the relevant documents suggests that the DES and the Government were clearly aware of the possible employment problems likely to face diversified degree graduates, but rather than confronting the issues head on, they chose not to highlight them and, in effect, left the colleges concerned to cope as best they could.

Two extracts from the 1972 White Paper's general sections on higher education are worth juxtaposing:

> The motives that impel sixth formers to seek higher education are many, various and seldom clear-cut.....But not far from the surface of most candidates' minds is the tacit belief that higher education will go far to guarantee them a better job. (Department of Education & Science 1972b, pp.30-1)

> The expansion of higher education provision has already reached the point where employers' requirements for such highly qualified people in the forms of employment they traditionally enter are, in the aggregate, largely being met.....there seems little doubt that the continuing expansion of higher education will more than match the likely expansion of graduate employment opportunites as they are understood today. (Department of Education & Science 1972b, p.34)

It is difficult to imagine that the tensions between these two statements were lost on DES officials and Government ministers. Given, on the one hand, continued graduate expectations of career benefits, and on the other, a likely oversupply of graduates, with all its associated problems of underemployment and 'filtering down' the labour market, the prospect of considerable mis-match between expectations and outcome cannot have been totally unpredicted. Furthermore, information was available to indicate that general arts graduates were particularly vulnerable to the problems of oversupply and lack of demand (e.g. Hebron 1971). Yet, contrary to offering the colleges the resources and encouragement to broaden the occupational scope of their teaching degrees or to develop new and more economically-relevant courses, the Government emphatically restricted the colleges to diversified versions of their existing BEd curricula:

> Institutions applying for this more general authority

> [to diversify their courses]<2> will need to show that such courses are wholly or mainly constituted of elements common to existing or proposed courses of teacher education or to other advanced courses already approved and that no additional staff will be required. (Department of Education & Science 1974, p.46)

Consequently, due to the lack of more positive and detailed directives, as well as to the limits of curricula development enforced on the colleges, the Conservative Government of 1972 must bear a heavy responsibility for the employment experiences of diversified degree graduates from colleges of higher education. Significantly, when a Government department did eventually show signs of recognizing the paucity of policy formations with respect to the careers of non-teaching degree graduates from colleges, they came from the Department of Employment and not the Department of Education and Science:

> ..more information is needed about the growing number of graduates from institutions of higher education in England and Wales other than universities and polytechnics so that the degree courses provided by these institutions can be more closely related to the demand for graduates. (Catto et al 1981, p.13)

By way of responding to this recommendation, it is hoped that, in the first of the selected policy areas, the research findings can be used to assess the assumption that, in terms of a variety of employment outlets, the diversified degree programmes represent a better investment of resources than teaching degree courses.

2. Given the colleges' dual tradition and expertise in professional training and subject specialisms, principally in the liberal arts, the potential for diversification could be advanced along

two main paths: one, building on the former, would provide specific vocational preparation for other occupations apart from teaching; the other would offer a combination of the established subject areas as first degrees in their own right. Examples of the former are training courses for social workers and occupational therapists; examples of the latter, BA in History and English. From the perspective of 'ideal' institutional models, accentuation on a diversity of vocationally-related courses would present the colleges as small polytechnics, whereas emphasis on general arts degrees would cast them in the mould of small universities.

The Robbins Report (Committee on Higher Education 1963), the first official document in modern times to hint at diversification in the colleges, sought to encourage experimentation with both types of diversification:

> ...Some colleges will wish to broaden their scope by providing courses, with a measure of common studies, for entrants to various professions in the social services. We think they should be allowed to do so as soon as practicable, although we believe it would be wrong to suppose that the needs of these professions are likely to be such as to require large-scale provision in the generality of colleges. Other colleges may wish to provide general courses in arts or science subjects. (Committee on Higher Education 1963, p.108)

A decade later, during which time thirty polytechnics had been created, the James Report (DES 1972a) commented on the prospects for diversification in the colleges. In contrast to Robbins, however, the James committee rejected the idea of a plurality of specific professional training courses and opted for the provision of general courses in the shape of the proposed DipHE:

> The colleges would contain a large range of students who, on completing the diploma course, would proceed on a number of different paths. The colleges would therefore be no longer training teachers in isolation. This solution to the problem of isolation would be better than the 'diversification' often urged, which seems to imply an unrealistic proliferation of specialist training courses for different professions, within the same institutions. (Department of Education and Science 1972a, p.69)

Apparently accepting this argument, the Government also favoured the generalist type of diversification policy and pursued it, not only through the DipHE, but also by allowing some colleges to offer first degrees, predominantly in the arts and social sciences. These policies were implemented through the 1972 White Paper and the subsequent circulars (DES 1973 and 1974), which together clearly established the Government's preference for the non-specialist version of diversification. In theory, colleges were free to explore the possibiliy of mounting alternative professional training courses, and some in fact succeeded in doing so. However, the DES restrictions controlling the setting up of vocational courses (e.g. through the approval of Regional Advisory Councils, limitations on recruiting new staff, etc.) were generally instrumental in reducing the chances of this form of diversification becoming the dominant mode. In the absence of any publicly available analysis of the respective employment relevance of the two modes of diversification, it is hoped that the research results can provide some broad indications of the consequences and advisability of sustaining the current weight of emphasis between them.

3. The third policy issue involves an examination of the extent to which the results offer any pointers as to the kind of distinctive curricula developments (e.g. work experience or increased student choice of course components) that may enhance the employability and economic relevance of diversified degree graduates? Although an empirically-based analysis of such a question is notably absent from the available literature, a number of commentators have emphasized or predicted the need for it. Catto et al (1981) have already been quoted to this effect and Murray (1978) has indicated the degree of controversy which may surround the issue of the economic relevance of the colleges' diversified curricula:

> Serious problems of graduate unemployment seem unavoidable. The kind of courses many former colleges of education are best equipped to provide will certainly come under increasing criticism in relation to the manpower requirements of a sick economy. (Murray 1978, p.59)

In addition to the particular absence of employment-related commentaries on diversified courses, there is also a shortage of literature dealing with general aspects of the diversified curricula. However, according to the few available sources, it is generally accepted that, as a consequence of the Government's restrictions on the development of diversified courses and the recruitment of new staff, the non-teaching degree programmes were largely confined to the liberal arts emphasis characteristic of the BEd and Cert. Ed tradition. Left with very little room for manoeuvre or real innovation, the former colleges of education devised non-teaching degree course offerings which closely paralleled their BEd origins (Locke 1979, Locke and Russell 1979, Adelman and Gibbs 1980a & b, Murray 1978). Indeed, in many colleges, especially those validated by universities, subjects

could be studied in groups which contained students reading for BEd degrees and non-teaching degrees such as a BA or BSc (McNamara and Ross 1982). Because of the limitations on staffing and the necessity of avoiding direct competition with the universities for student enrolments, the vast majority of diversified programmes were not single subject degrees, but combined degrees, usually in two subject areas. Similarly, to secure safe and speedy passage through the necessary validation procedures, most courses were designed according to established and reputable academic procedures rather than risk less conventional proposals. As a result, the colleges have been criticized for 'aping the universities' and extending still further the process of 'academic drift'. Raggett and Clarkson (1976) were among the first commentators who regretted the lack of imagination in most of the new course offerings and observed that:

> ....colleges have played safe and reproduced their existing teacher education main subject courses as new degrees and avoided the harder, more perilous development of new and untried areas. (Raggett and Clarkson 1976, p.163)

More stringent criticism was levelled against the subject orientation of the diversified courses by the Conservative MP, Keith Hampson, who argued:

> The people that the country lacks most are technicians, not degree people, and especially not people with degrees in humanities....All too often..diversification and amalgamation have meant that liberal arts courses are being substituted [for teacher training]. Perhaps this was inevitable, given the sort of staff and facilities which most of the colleges of education had... The result has been a proliferation of degree courses of a kind and quality which the country and our students simply do not need. (Hampson 1977)

A further reasonably widespread feature of the newly introduced diversified curricula was the adoption of modular or flexible programme structures, whereby students could select course units in line with their developing interests and career aspirations (Murray 1978, Lynch 1979, McNamara and Ross 1982). Following up recommendations expressed in the James Report, the 1972 White Paper and subsequent DES Circulars (DES 1972a; 1972b, 1973, 1974), a key claim made for unit-based schemes was the opportunities it provided for undergraduates to defer their commitment to teaching or alternative occupations. The extent to which transfer between teaching and non-teaching degree programmes was possible, the relative degrees of student choice in modular structures and its consequences for the institutional deployment of resources, are aspects of unit-based curricula which are well observed by Adelman and Gibbs (1979, 1980a, 1980b).

In addition to the general and widely recognized characteristics of non-teaching degree courses, Thorburn and Parker (1978 & 1980) have produced two rare sociological critiques of the curricula effects of diversification in the colleges. In the first of their papers, these authors maintain that during the period of diversification some key institutional changes have taken place: an increasing bureaucratization, a growth in courses with all-embracing inter-disciplinary labels, and a spread of a vocational orientation which involves a much more instrumental appraisal of means and ends in higher education courses. In the later paper (Thorburn and Parker 1980), they develop their notion of a vocationalist orientation by distinguishing between colleges' 'traditional (true) vocationalism' - clearly-defined ends and means related to teacher training- and a 'new

vocationalism', which is characterized by a "lack of clear occupational ends combined with a variety of uncertain educational means."(p.63) It is suggested that colleges are experiencing the trauma of attempting to adopt 'new vocationalism', while simultaneously preserving the atmosphere of a monotechnic and its commitment to 'traditional vocationalism'. Asserting that claims for the 'new vocationalism' are merely rhetorical, the authors remain extremely sceptical of its relevance to the problems currently facing the colleges:

> Dimly perceived notions of the constitutive elements of this new form of vocationalism have been presented as part of the rationale of many of the recent courses.....This new vocationalism, with its dependence upon eclectic academic enquiry, and only vaguely formulated occupational ends may well have flourished in the more experimental and expansionist educational climate of a decade ago, but had become increasingly out of phase with the changed economic situation of the 1970s. (Thorburn and Parker 1980, pp.63-4)

In its place, these sociologists advocate:

> Ours has been an academic's message. We have argued for the retention and strengthening of traditional main subject areas where possible. Indeed the natural grouping of small numbers of lecturers around their disciplines represents, for us at least, a last chance to provide centres of excellence in particular areas while simultaneously retaining many of the face-to-face relationships associated with the older collegiate structures. (Thorburn and Parker 1980, p.69)

Bearing in mind that it is tenable to reject the above authors' prescriptive assertions yet accept their descriptive devices, it is worth considering a set of arguments on the college curricula, which appear to be diametrically opposed to the ones just posed. Stodd (1980 & 1981), for example, has argued that the process of academic drift in the colleges has resulted in a lack of distinctiveness in many diversified course offerings, when compared to similar ones provided in the universities and polytechnics. Consequently, in view of the

forecasted smaller age cohorts, static age participation rates and financial restraints; Stodd maintains that the continued development of a traditional academic and liberal arts curricula as a pale reflection of that which is already available in universities and polytechnics, will severely jeopardize the colleges' chances of survival. As a counter measure, he counsels the taking of positive steps to create a new and qualitatively different curricula for the colleges. It is suggested that a group of colleges should combine to operate a flexible credit transfer scheme, which would allow for different preferences in modes and phasing of study. Of particular relevance to our present interests, Stodd also advocates the inclusion of life skills and work experience schemes within the diversified curricula. A small number of colleges have in fact already introduced such components (Binks 1979) and it is upon the graduates' evaluation and economic relevance of these that much of the attention in this policy area is directed.

The wider graduate labour market

Two reasons in particular justify placing college graduates' careers in the context of the experiences of graduates from a wider range of higher education institutions. Firstly, it would be highly misleading to consider the early careers of college graduates in isolation from recent trends in the graduate labour market as a whole. As a group, college graduates certainly possess a number of distinguishing features, but as graduates, they have much in common with their counterparts from other sectors of higher education and, as such, they too confront the existing conditions of the graduate

employment market. Consequently, the employment patterns of college graduates can only be fully understood when seen against the backcloth of the overall market for the highly qualified. Because of this, in the final chapter, policy issues of specific relevance to the colleges are prefaced by a discussion of the research's policy implications for wider aspects of the graduate labour market.

The second reason for offering a broader context is based on the view that the findings on college graduates' early careers provide an opportunity for exploring the plausibility of various sociological explanations of the relations between higher education and the economy. As will be demonstrated in the penultimate chapter, the sociological literature lacks a recent empirically-based account of graduates' early careers, and the present research, if located in a wider context, provides a useful basis for addressing this oversisight. Consequently, in Chapter Seven the research data is used to interrogate the explanatory power of three areas of sociological theorizing: technical-functionalism, a neo-Marxist and a neo-Weberian conflict theory. The capacity of each of these theories to account for the particular case of higher education provision in question is examined and the most promising is selected for modification in the light of the theoretical tenets which appear to be demanded by the empirical findings. The capacity to account for the dominant features of the case study - e.g. individual expectations of education and work, graduates' experiences of occupational selection procedures, the mediation of economic influences in the inauguration of diversified degree programmes - constitutes the main criterion adopted in the evaluation of the plausibility of explanatory frameworks and in the

formulation of alternative theoretical explanatory proposals. However, in seeking to examine the appropriateness of general theories, it is fully acknowledged that the theoretical evaluation and alternative proposals are limited in application to the particular characteristics of the case in question. Further studies are needed to assess the scope for greater generality. Finally, an additional requirement is that any policy implications arising out of the research findings must be compatible with the theoretical underpinnings and development deemed to be warranted by the empirical material.

While the wider policy-related and theoretical issues need not be approached until the final chapters, it is felt that a brief summary of the recent trends in the early careers of graduates in general is an essential preliminary to inspecting the experiences of college graduates in particular. As a result, it is hoped that the following points summarize the main trends of graduates' initial careers in recent years.

For some time now, there have been substantial increases in the total number of first degree graduates from universities and polytechnics. The output from UK universities has risen from 57,000 in 1975 to 65,000 in 1979, and 67,000 in 1980<3>. The number obtaining full-time and sandwich degrees from polytechnics in England and Wales has increased from 14,000 in 1977 to 19,000 in 1979, and 19,500 in 1980<4>. Throughout the 1970s, there was a tendency in both sectors for the number of women graduates to increase at a greater rate than men, and the proportion of degrees in the arts and social sciences rose, while those in science and engineering fell (Catto et al 1981).

It has been reported that about one in every six people becoming available for employment possesses a degree - the highest ever proportion.

As Table 1.2 indicates, the 1970s witnessed an upsurge in graduate unemployment, despite a very slight but temporary improvement in 1978 and 1979. In addition, the carry-over of job seekers from 1980 is said to be about 15 per cent, three times the normal rate (Hunter 1981).

Even if the calculations include sandwich degrees, where unemployment is much lower, it can be seen from Table 1.2, that polytechnics have significantly higher rates of unemployment<5>. In the Unit for Manpower Studies (UMS) survey of 1970 graduates from universities and polytechnics, Williamson (1981) found that those graduates with a good class of first degree spent less time in unemployment, especially those who entered public administration and industry.

Table 1.2 Unemployment among university and polytechnic graduates<a>

Percentage of first degree graduates from universities in the U.K. and polytechnics in England and Wales still seeking permanent employment<b> based on home graduates whose destinations were known<c>.

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Univ's.	8.3	8.9	9.4	12.1	12.4	12.5	11.2	11.6	12.6
<e> Poly's.	n/a	n/a	n/a	15.0	<d> 16.4	18.0	16.9	17.3	20.2

NOTES

<a> The disparity between the percentages of 'unknowns' for each sector, although not shown in this Table, creates the need for caution when drawing comparisons in this and all the remaining tables.

<b> that is, 'believed unemployed at December 31' plus 'gained temporary home employment'(plus 'Employment or Further Study Arranged' for 1973 and 1974).

<c> excluding 'overseas students returned home' and graduates in Education and Medicine subjects.

<d> covers only 27 of the 30 polytechnics in England and Wales.

<e> full-time and sandwich

SOURCE: Calculated by the author from First Destination Statistics (University Grants Committee; Polytechnic Careers Advisers)

During the late 1970s, the proportion of unemployed university graduates from the discipline areas of engineering, science and social studies actually fell; in contrast, the corresponding proportion from the arts area increased (see Table 1.3). By 1979, arts-based graduates from universities and polytechnics were respectively about five and seven times more likely to be unemployed than their colleagues in engineering. 1979 was a particularly difficult year for arts graduates, especially from the polytechnics, where one in four arts-based graduates were unemployed. In all subjects, apart from engineering, the polytechnic rates were significantly higher than the universities. This may suggest that the perceived status of the sector in which a graduate studies is an important determinant of graduate employment patterns and prospects.

Covering the period 1976-1980, Table 1.4 shows that for both universities and polytechnics, a slightly greater proportion of female graduates accepted temporary work than did their male colleagues. Likewise, a little larger share of women was not available for employment. The universities generally had similar percentages of each gender in the 'believed unemployed' category, but the proportion of women polytechnic graduates in this category was usually a little higher than that of men. A large part of these tendencies seems to be operating independently of other factors such as subject area and institutional status.

Table 1.3 Graduate unemployment for different subject areas

Percentage of first degree graduates (men and women, full-time and sandwich) in different subject areas still seeking permanent employment<a> based on the total number of graduates in each subject whose destinations were known<b>

		1975<c>	1976	1977	1978	1979
Engineering	Univ's.	6.2	5.7	5.2	3.1	3.3
	Poly's.	5.6	5.6	5.5	4.1	4.3
Science	Univ's.	12.2	12.0	12.2	10.0	9.8
	Poly's.	12.7	15.4	16.8	15.6	15.3
Social Studies	Univ's.	12.9	12.7	12.4	11.1	11.6
	Poly's.	15.0	17.4	18.3	16.4	15.2
Arts	Univ's.	13.1	14.1	14.5	14.7	16.0
	Poly's.	22.1	21.8	25.8	26.2	27.9

NOTES

<a> that is 'believed unemployed at December 31' plus 'gained temporary home employment'.

<b> covering G.B. universities and polytechnics in England and Wales, excluding graduates in Education and Medicine subjects.

<c> covers only 27 of the 30 polytechnics in England and Wales.

SOURCE: Calculated from statistics presented in Catto et al (1981) pp.78-79.

Table 1.4 Comparison of male and female unemployment<a>

Percentage of the total known destinations for each sex of all university and polytechnic first degree graduates who were believed to be unemployed, in temporary work or not available for employment<b>

			1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
UNIV'S.	Not available for employment	M	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.9	1.9
		F	2.4	2.6	2.5	3.0	3.1
	Temporary Home Employment	M	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.7	2.2
		F	5.2	6.0	6.0	6.2	2.8
	Believed to be Unemployed	M	6.1	5.8	4.7	4.8	8.8
		F	6.1	5.4	4.7	5.0	7.8
POLY'S.	Not available for employment	M	0.9	0.8	1.3	1.2	1.3
		F	2.0	2.4	3.0	2.3	2.9
	Temporary Home Employment	M	5.6	7.2	7.5	7.1	5.1
		F	6.4	11.2	10.8	10.8	7.3
	Believed to be Unemployed	M	9.1	7.9	6.5	6.7	12.0
		F	10.2	10.1	8.0	8.2	11.6

NOTES

<a> Unlike Tables 1.2 and 1.3, 'unemployment' is broken down into its constitutent elements (viz. 'believed to be unemployed' and 'temporary home employment').

<b> Includes all graduates with known destinations from U.K. universities and polytechnics in England and Wales.

SOURCE: Calculated by the author from First Destination Statistics op.cit.

Between 1975 and 1979, the number of university graduates undertaking further academic study or training declined (see Table 1.5), while the number entering permanent employment rose (see Table 1.6). Although not shown in the Table, a smaller proportion of polytechnic graduates undertook further education or training, but they too displayed a similar decline: 25 per cent of all known first degree graduates in 1975, falling to 20 per cent in 1979. A slightly larger proportion of polytechnic graduates, rather than that of university graduates, found permanent employment, and a similar, if less marked increase was also evident for the polytechnic graduates: 53 per cent of all home graduates entered permanent employment in 1976, compared with 57 per cent in 1979.

Table 1.5 Trends in the graduate entry into further academic study or training<a>

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Academic study in U.K.	6,632	6,681	6,229	6,635	6,465
Teacher training	7,530	6,885	5,946	5,454	5,313
Other further academic study/training	4,000	4,527	4,778	4,839	4,579
Total entering further academic study/training	18,162	18,093	16,953	16,928	16,357
Total as % of all graduates	35.7	34.9	31.2	29.6	27.7

NOTES

<a> Includes all UK university graduates whose first destinations were known.

SOURCE: First Destinations of University Graduates 1978-79 (University Grants Committee) p.5

Table 1.6 Trends in the graduate entry into permanent home employment<a>

Year	Number	% of total home graduates of known destination
1975	21,922	45.4
1976	22,590	46.3
1977	25,328	49.9
1978	27,672	52.5
1979	29,390	53.9

NOTES

<a> Includes all home graduates from universities in U.K. whose first destinations were known.

SOURCE: First Destinations of University Graduates 1978-79 (University Grants Committee) p.5

As illustrated in Table 1.7, the proportion of first degree graduates from universities entering Industry and Commerce increased over the 1970s. This was mainly due to a rise in the numbers entering Commerce, a major outlet for the growing number of women graduates. In contrast, the proportion absorbed by Public Service, especially the civil service and diplomatic service fell. The percentage of full-time polytechnic graduates who entered Industry and Commerce was similar to that of universities, but for those on sandwich courses, the proportion was much higher.

Table 1.7 Employer categories of graduates entering permanent home employment

Percentage of those entering 'permanent home employment'

	1972	1974	1976	1977	1978
INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE					
Universities<a>	49	52	54	57	58
Polytechnics<b>					
Full-time	n/a	n/a	56	57	57
Sandwich	n/a	n/a	80	81	79
PUBLIC SERVICE					
Universities<a>	33	32	30	27	26
Polytechnics<b>					
Full-time	n/a	n/a	28	25	26
Sandwich	n/a	n/a	16	13	16

NOTES

<a> Includes all U.K. universities
<b> Excludes graduates who obtained CNAA BEd degrees in 1977 and 1978; includes all polytechnics in England and Wales.

SOURCE: DES Statistical Bulletin 2/80 op.cit.

Combining the data on first degree graduates from polytechnics and universities, Table 3 in the DES Statistical Bulletin 2-80 (DES 1980) indicates that for 1977 and 1978, whereas 40 per cent of arts-based graduates undertook further study or training, only 30 per cent entered permanent home employment. By way of comparison, almost half of the social studies and science graduates, and two-thirds of engineering graduates, found permanent home employment. In addition, arts graduates frequently formed the highest share of those graduates who were not available for employment. Using the same approach and data set, Table 2 in the DES Statistical Bulletin 2-80 (DES 1980) reveals the sectors of employment entered by graduates in different

subjects. Of those arts graduates who entered permanent home employment, the highest proportion, approximately one-third, accepted jobs in Commerce. Traditionally, the largest proportion of graduates absorbed by Public Service and Education are arts graduates (Catto et al 1981). Alternatively, almost three-quarters of science and maths graduates who found permanent employment, did so in Industry and Commerce, as did 60 per cent of social studies graduates.

As a general rule, a greater proportion of male first degree graduates entered permanent home employment than female graduates. In 1978 for example, of all male university graduates whose first destinations were known, 53 per cent entered permanent home employment; compared with 44 per cent of female graduates. In polytechnics, the corresponding figures were 57 and 52 per cent. Despite a recent increase in the proportion of women graduates going into Industry, in 1978 nearly a quarter of men, but less than one tenth of women university graduates, took up posts in Industry. For polytechnics, the percentages were slightly lower for women. There was seldom any difference between the sexes of those entering Commerce.

Comparing the results of Kelsall et al's (1970) research with the UMS survey, Williamson (1979b) concludes:

> There is some slight evidence that the large increase in the overall numbers of graduates between 1960 and 1970 may have led to some filtering downwards into work traditionally regarded as non-graduate in nature. The percentage of graduates entering social services and personnel type work in their first job was slightly higher in 1970 (2 per cent of men and 8 per cent of women) than in 1960 (1 per cent of men and 6 per cent of women). A similar pattern exists for

> secretarial and clerical types of work.... (Williamson 1979b, p.1228)

Catto et al (1981) suggest that the problem of 'filtering down' is particularly acute for social studies and arts graduates.

The UMS study of the early careers movements of 1970 graduates found that men were more mobile than women in terms of occupation and type of work, but the reverse was the case for sector of employment. Over half the graduates who changed their jobs did so in the first two years, and a high proportion of women left for personal reasons. In a study of the retention of graduates in 264 firms, Hutt and Parsons (1981) discovered that half their graduate recruits had left these firms after five years, most of these losses occurring during the first three years.

Among the reasons for choosing their first jobs, graduates placed particular emphasis on responsible and interesting work, a sufficient intellectual challenge, the opportunity to work with people and the constructive use of time. Although salary was often a secondary factor, engineers were especially responsive to a high starting salary and promotion assumed greater importance a few years after graduation, especially for men. Arts and social studies students were more disdainful of industry than their scientific and engineering colleagues (Burns 1980, Williamson 1981).

Among the methods found most helpful in applying for and obtaining first jobs, 1970 graduates gave high ratings (in a general order of priority) to academic staff, friends and relatives, careers

appointment services, newspaper or journal advertisements and employers' visits. Women in particular, found contacts through an existing job very useful and Careers Appointments Services were especially popular in universities (Williamson 1981). A MORI study, commissioned by graduate employers and carried out in 1980, interviewed 1,085 final-year undergraduates and found that 80 per cent had made use of the university careers service before March in their final year (Burns 1980).

Of the 1970 UMS sample, the highest starting salaries were generally paid to engineering graduates; while arts graduates were usually the least well paid. On average, women obtained lower starting salaries than men, irrespective of degree subject, class of degree, type of institution etc. (Williamson 1981).

In addition to lower starting salaries, women graduates face a variety of problems which often place them at a disadvantage in the labour market. Of necessity, only a few of numerous examples can be cited here. These include: the restricted job opportunities for a woman because of the priorities which are typically given to her partner's career (e.g. limitations on geographical area etc.); the lack of opportunities for promotion and the unrepresentativeness of women in many employing organizations (e.g. on the basis of the UMS research, Williamson (1981) concluded that, in contrast to male graduates, women have only half the chance of reaching managerial status in their early careers); the various socialization processes which lead many women to perceive certain areas of employment as unsuitable for their gender (e.g. there is some evidence to suggest

that the percentage of unsuccessful applicants for posts in industry is the same for both sexes -hence, the problem seems to be a short-fall in applications from women<6>).

Understanding the demand side of the market on the basis of employers' predictions of their future requirements is fraught with difficulties. Consequently, much of the literature infers demand trends from unemployment rates in the supply of graduates. Using this approach, it is apparent that rates in the late 1970s favoured graduates in engineering and science, with an emphasis on applied rather than pure knowledge. For the arts, and to a lesser extent, the social studies graduates, the position deteriorated still further. Catto et al (1981) conclude:

> The unemployment rates of recent graduates in these subject areas suggest that there has been a certain amount of slack and that proposals to expand the number of higher education places, especially in arts subjects and particularly at polytechnics, should be looked at very critically. (Catto et al, p.11)

Qualitative demands consistently made by employers include improvements in numeracy, especially among arts students, an increase in the practical awareness of real-life problems and an analytical capacity to solve them (Scott 1980, Hunter 1981).

Finally, a survey of the opinions of eighty-six 'milk round' employers challenges the notion that university and polytechnic qualifications are of equal status and currency value (Bacon et al 1979). The vast majority of employers thought that the universities produced better students both intellectually and socially.

Polytechnics were viewed as producing second rate graduates and a knowledge of industry was not felt to compensate for this deficiency. Interestingly, the most common reason given to account for the perceived differences was lower intake standards. From this, the researchers suppose a self-perpetuating cycle:

> ...lower grade applicants become lower status graduates giving the polytechnics themselves a lesser reputation than universities, which therefore attract lower grade applicants, and so on. (Bacon et al 1979, p.101)

The combined effects of the above trends<7> make it difficult to imagine a more unfavourable time for college students to be launched into the graduate employment market. They entered the market at a time when the highest ever output of new graduates coincided with a diminishing number of suitable vacancies. Declining opportunities for further study and training presented additional difficulties, which resulted in exasperating and increasing the competition for scarce employment. Worse still, it is widely believed that the majority of college graduates fall within the two categories of graduates, women and arts/social studies graduates, who are most susceptible to the problems of unemployment, lack of demand and 'filtering down'.

Neither does it appear that this over-representation of graduates with special difficulties can be offset by a high ranking in any 'institutional pecking order'. If the lower intake standards attributed to polytechnics also apply to colleges, then it would seem likely, following Bacon et al (1979), that employers will perceive college graduates as third, or at best, equal second, rate material. Finally, in view of the acknowledged value of employers' visits and

careers advisory services to university and polytechnic graduates, the absence, or at best, early development of similar provisions in colleges may well constitute yet another handicap. In such adverse circumstances, most observers concede that it would be unrealistic to expect the 1979 college graduates to excel in terms of first destination performance. It is against this wider background that the initial careers of non-teaching degree graduates from colleges of higher education must be viewed.

Summary

In this opening chapter, it has been argued that, for a variety of reasons, the issue of higher education's contribution to economic and employment needs is of great importance. Reflecting this priority and in view of the absence of a similar study in the existing literature, it was felt that the diversified degree graduates from colleges of higher education constituted an interesting case in point. Having reviewed the historical background to the colleges' recent transformations, a number of specific concerns were subsumed under the general empirical question, 'What indications of the economic contribution of diversified degrees emerge from the portrayal of graduates' early careers?'

The discussion of these issues was thought to entail both policy and wider explanatory dimensions which were worthy of examination. Under the former, three areas were selected as being particularly significant issues for the colleges: (1) diversification

through BEd or BA? (2) vocational or general diversification? (3) distinctive curricula features in diversified degree programmes? For the wider dimension, a review of the recent trends in the general graduate labour market was offered. A detailed examination of the suitability of available theoretical models which purport to explain relations between educational institutions and the economy will be undertaken in Chapter Seven, and Chapter Eight includes a discussion of policy problems, the relevance of which extends beyond that of the college sector.

NOTES

<1> Throughout the thesis, the terms 'general arts' and 'liberal arts' are used interchangeably to denote the broad range of non-applied or non-technical degree subjects implied in the DES's (1972b) phrase 'the arts and human sciences'(p.44). When specifically referring to the subjects included in category 1 of the 'Subject Classification of College Degrees' (see Appendix C), the terms 'arts' or 'art-based' are adopted.

<2> [...] denote author's (JH's) editorial insertions.

<3> Source: First Destinations of University Graduates (University Grants Committee)

<4> Source: First Destinations of Polytechnic Students (Polytechnic Careers Advisers Statistics Working Party).

<5> For differences between full-time and sandwich courses, and for fluctuations in the constituent elements of the overall unemployment percentage (viz 'believed unemployed' and 'temporary employment') see

the Department of Education and Science's Statistical Bulletin 2/80 (DES 1980).

<6> See Williamson (1979a).

<7> For a useful, more detailed discussion of recent trends in the graduate labour market, see Hunter (1981).

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODS AND CONTEXT

Methodological approach

In view of the lack of discussion and the shortage of reliable information in the literature, the policy-orientated justifications for conducting original empirical research into the selected area are almost self-evident. For instance, without evidence of graduates' early career patterns and problems, there could be no rational appraisal of the employment relevance of different forms of diversification and no empirically-based examination of the claim made for BA/BSc degree transferability. Thus, although the colleges of higher education constitute only a small part of the total higher education provision, the curricula and policy implications to be derived from the empirical investigation have extremely important repercussions for the numerous colleges, their staff and students, present and prospective.

The theoretical pretext for collecting empirical data is as important, if not as immediately obvious, as the policy-orientated one. Firstly, providing an adequate and plausible theoretical framework is held to be a necessary requirement for the extraction of any policy implications arising from research findings. Secondly, a major fault

with much recent theorizing in the education-economy field is that the high level of abstraction at which it is pitched, frequently loses sight of the diversity and complexity of specific social realities. As a counter to the tendency towards such theoretical alienation, the development of explanatory models needs to proceed in the face of the challenging subtleties and contradictions inherent in particular cases. Consequently, the methodological relation between theory and data which has been adopted here represents neither grand theorizing, hypothesis testing in the hypothetico-deductive style nor the refutation of testable tenets in the Popperian mould, but the collection of empirical material in order to sensitize the exploration and formation of theoretical propositions to the grounded reality of a specifc case.

In such a way, the analysis offered in Chapter Seven proceeds from an examination of the plausibility of selected theoretical perspectives to a similar form of heuristic theory building to that advanced by Bensman and Vidich (1970). Accordingly, existing theories are evaluated in a comparative manner and a reconstructed version is developed in the light of the salient data. Heuristic theory building possesses a number of limitations, including the disadvantage that it is not particularly amenable to survey methods, which seldom permit the researcher to return to the field to test out and refine emerging hypotheses (Bensman and Vidich 1970). Furthermore, in selecting existing theories rather than building them upwards from the data, the researcher, according to Glaser and Strauss (1970) is in danger of doing no more than writing "footnotes to imported theories" (p.296). Additionally, it is recognized that, as with much similar work, substantial elements of the theoretical advancement attempted in the

study are shaped by a priori assumptions and biases rather than by empirical verification. In spite of these shortcomings, approached in this way, the research data are seen as making a major contribution to informing key facets of the theoretical constructions offered in the penultimate chapter.

Although the preceding points underline the desirability of locating theoretical development in the context of some empirical material, it remains to be explained why the particular focus of research - i.e. the early careers and attitudes of graduates of diversified degree programmes from colleges of higher education - is justifiable from a theoretical angle.

As will be apparent from the review of the theoretical literature in Chapter Seven, such topics as the meaning and use of credentials, the primary nature of education's contribution to economic processes, the extent of functional correspondence between educational attainment and occupational demands, the motivations and expectations held by individuals, and the problematic mediation of economic influences and constraints on educational provisions, comprise some of the most salient and keenly disputed issues in recent work in the sociology of education and economy relations. The specific case of the introduction of diversified degree programmes and graduates' evaluatory accounts of their courses and early career experiences were judged to afford valuable opportunities for exploring these and related sociological issues. By way of illustration, the particular case was seen as providing useful insights into such phenomena as, the prevailing perceptions of the use of degrees in occupational selection

procedures, the types of functional and dysfunctional relationships between educational achievements and occupational tasks, and graduates' intentions and aspirations in the demand for extended education and satisfying employment. Consequently, in light of the appositeness of many of the main features displayed in the focus of study, the theoretical grounds for collecting data relating to the case appear solid and convincing. As contended in Chapter Seven, the absence of a similar empirically-based account in the relevant theoretical literature underlines the potential contribution of the thesis to this area of sociological discourse.

In so far as it espouses the juxtapositioning of an awareness of individual meanings with a recognition of the constraints and structures which influence them, the methodological approach underlying the data collection and analysis approximates what Fay (1975) has termed the 'critical model of social science'. On the one hand, following numerous critiques (Cicourel 1964; Filmer et al 1972, Harre 1981, Hindess 1977 and Patton 1978), the approach of the critical model eschews the reduction of the sociological enterprise to an orthodox positivistic exercise, which ignores man's ability to construct his own meanings and which has been labelled the 'agricultural-botanist' view of research (Parlett and Hamilton 1977). On the other hand, it also rejects a humanist interpretive alternative which neglects quasi-causal explanations, unintended consequences of actions, structural patterns and conflict within society, and variances between actors' constructions and actual social behaviour (Sharp and Green 1975).

Instead, according to the critical model, the researcher must attempt to uncover the intentions and desires of the actors under his consideration, as well as the rules and constitutive meanings of social practices (e.g. occupational selection procedures). However, the enterprise must not stop at this point, but proceed to explicate participants' constructions of their social action and experience in relation to quasi-causal systems of social relations, which frequently play a significant role in influencing the meanings, motivations and dissatisfactions of the actors under study. As this implies, in contrast to the pure phenomenological position, the conceptual prospect of 'false consciousness' is allowed for, in that participants' definitions of a situation may differ from the systematically-conducted but reflexive observations of the external indices of social structures and habitual practices.

As a result of aspiring to apply this methodological approach, attempts have been made in the data collection and analysis to accommodate participants' interpretive accounts with the observed concomitant variations between the various categories constructed or selected by the researcher (e.g. graduates' own accounts of the intellectual aspects of their work are set along side correlations between a pre-coded attitudinal statement indicating 'satisfaction with the intellectual stimulation in jobs' and 'type of work' categories).

It should be stressed that a value-free neutrality is not claimed for these categories (Gouldner 1973). It should also be emphasized that the success in applying the critical model is bounded by the inevitable restrictions arising from the practical necessities

of research implementation, as well as the considerable epistemological difficulties in reconciling contrasting paradigms (Dawe 1970, Giddens 1976, Guba and Lincoln 1981, Silverman 1970). However, despite the considerable shortcomings caused by these constraints, the attempt to apply the critical model, even if only marginally succesful in practice, is still considered preferable to the narrow and misleading accounts which tend to result from operating exclusively in either of the two conventional approaches.

Endeavouring to apply this approach by making use of multiple methods (Cook and Reichardt 1979), a substantial amount of time has been given over to balancing the collection and analysis of interpretive, and usually qualitative, material with that of more positivistic quantitative data. Owing to the demands of technical necessities, however, the end result amounts to a protracted series of unavoidable compromises (Patton 1982). For instance, in order to explore the relation between the diversified degree curricula and employment opportunites, interviews were conducted with appropriate members of college staff. While it proved possible to collect much valuable qualitative material through informal interviewing of staff, the priority use of resources did not permit the inquiry to be extended so that categories could be derived from this data to form the basis for a more quantifiable staff survey, which would complement the interview accounts. Neither was there the time to procure empirical information to assess the substantiality of staff's perceptions of the external processes and structures believed to constrain the nature and scope for innovations in diversification.

Alternatively, to facilitate the collection of data relating to graduates' accounts of the transition from college to work, and to their evaluations of various facets of the relations between higher education and employment, a postal questionnaire was administered to a sample of college graduates thirty months after they had graduated. The use of a postal survey, which inevitably reinforced the positivistic side of the research, was determined by the necessity of covering sufficient individual cases to provide a general picture of the patterns of graduates' careers. Informal interviewing and observational techniques would have required greater funding to cover the high costs of the travel that would have been necessary. In order to offset the quantitative orientation of postal surveys, a deliberate decision was taken to incorporate a substantial proportion of very open-ended items in the questionnaire and the qualitative accounts which emerged in response to these have been given considerable attention in the analysis of the research findings.

Following several of the techniques suggested by Spradley (1979), the analysis of the qualitative material arising from both the staff and graduate parts of the research has made regular use of the construction of 'ideal types'. Further details on the application of this technique are presented at the beginning of Chapter Three, where they are first used to group and classify staff responses. A useful commentary on the techniques of typology construction is provided by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983). On a number of occasions, the use of such techniques has allowed the interpretive material to be subjected to some rudimentary quantification. On other occasions, an indication of the quantifiable dimension has been gained by setting the

qualitative accounts along side the numerical frequencies of the corresponding responses to the codable items. Participants' qualitative accounts of their experiences and attitudes have also been used to illuminate their replies to the closed and fixed-choice items in the questionnaire.

In analyzing quantitative data from small-scale surveys, over-reliance on tests of statistical significance can have stultifying and distorting effects on the interpretation of the results. In an attempt to avoid such effects, the commentary on the questionnaire results has concentrated on highlighting a practical or commonsense significance rather than a simple statistical significance. Similarly, it has emphasized general trends rather than isolated occurences of statistical significance or insignificance. In keeping with this approach, any decision to treat a difference in frequencies as significant involves the consideration of educational, sociological and economic factors, as well as purely statistical ones.

On the other hand, although the use of statistical tests in sociological research has evoked considerable controversy (Morrison and Henkel 1970, Nachmias and Nachmias 1982), to disregard statistical tests completely is to run the risk of failing to demonstrate the appropriate support for the interpretations drawn. In view of this, the quantifiable data arising from the graduate survey (i.e. in Chapters Five and Six) have been subjected to a number of statistical tests, including tests of statistical significance and measures of association. The vast majority of these have consisted of the statistical options accompanying the crosstabulation procedure with the

computer programme, 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (Nie et al 1975). Where appropriate, the results of these tests are shown at the foot of the tables or in the text. In the case of the former, for crosstabulations involving nominal variables, levels of significance have been calculated by Chi-square tests and measures of the strength of relation by Phi or Cramer's V; for crosstabulations involving ordinal variables (including dichotomous variables), Tau b or Tau c have been used to measure both levels of significance and association. Thus, for the tables presented in Chapters Five and Six, (SS) indicates that a significance level of 5 per cent was achieved, (NS) denotes that the variations in the table were not significant at this level, and no reference to statistical levels can be taken to mean that Chi square tests were inapplicable to the particular tabulation of the data (e.g. more than 25 per cent of the cells displayed an expected frequency of less than 5).

However, given that the interpretation presented in text has generally been directed at the relation between one variable and a particular value or category within the matching variable, rather than at the overall correlation between the two variables, the levels of statistical significance presented in the text are generally of greater value than those in the tables. In order to facilitate the exposition of results presented in the form of percentages, the levels of statistical significance interspersed in the text are based on Zubin's nomograph for the testing of statistical significance of differences between percentages as outlined in Oppenheim (1973). Hence, the insertion of (SS) in the interpretation presented in Chapters Five and Six denotes a direct comparison between two samples which is

statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. Levels of significance are only provided for direct and explicit comparisons between two samples and where such a comparison has no SS reference, a 5 per cent level of significance was not attained. This, of course, should not be taken to mean that the observation has no practical significance.

Although the arguments for stating the actual levels of significance associated with each finding possess some validity (Skipper et al 1970); the suggestion that the researcher should refrain from selecting a recommended level underestimates the need to decide on an appropriate level on the basis of such criteria as sample size and the nature of the analysis undertaken (Labovitz 1970). Consequently, in view of established practice, the small samples involved, and the exploratory approach of the study, a level of 5 per cent was selected for present purposes. However, in following the conventional method, levels of statistical significance are presented not as proof of the refutation of null-hypotheses, but as indications that comparisons warrant close interpretive attention (Winch and Campbell 1970). To avoid the risk of dichotomizing variations into significant and non-significant interpretations, which often arises with reporting recommended levels, it cannot be stressed too strongly that other comparisons, many of which were statistically significant at the 10 per cent level, may well possess practical or substantive significance (Gold 1970, Selltiz et al 1977), if not statistical significance at the stated level.

The research context

The empirical data upon which this study is based were collected as part of a larger programme of research conducted under the auspices of the Combined Colleges Research Group (CCRG). This Group, an association of four colleges and two institutes of higher education, was formed in 1980 to fund and initiate research into different facets of their institutions and roles in the higher education sector. With a research team consisting of a Senior Research Fellow, a Research Fellow and a Research Assistant, the programme of work undertaken has covered such topics as the characteristics of the student constituency upon entry to the colleges, the experiences of undergraduates as they progressed through the institutions, and the subsequent careers followed by graduates after leaving their colleges. Work on this latter topic has been the responsibility of the Research Fellow and it is this area, the careers project, which has provided much useful data for the current study.

The idea for the CCRG developed from the work of an earlier DES funded project, 'A Study of Student Choice in the Context of Institutional Change' (Adelman and Gibbs 1979), which had monitored three former colleges of education during the first stages of diversification from purely teacher education establishments to ones which would also offer non-teaching BA/BSc degrees. Using registry, interview, observation and questionnaire material, Adelman and Gibbs wrote regular reports which were fed back to the colleges. As part of the attempt to foster institutional self-study, discussion groups were

established within each college to consider these documents and recommend suitable audiences to receive them. In addition to the material written for, and distributed to, an internal audience, the project team also produced conference papers, journal articles and two reports intended for a larger external audience (Adelman and Gibbs 1979, 1980a & 1980b).

Two of the colleges in the 'Student Choice' project were agreed that it was necessary to explore ways of continuing and extending its work into the 1980s. To this end, a number of other colleges were invited to establish the CCRG which would remain in existence until the end of the academic year 1983/4. Based at one of the member institutions, the Senior Research Fellow, Ian Gibbs, co-ordinated and directed the new programme of research from April 1980 until August 1984. The Research Assistant, Sally Cree, worked with the Group from September 1980 to May 1983 and the second Research Fellow, John Harland, worked on the project from January 1981 to August 1984. The second Research Fellow was given the special brief of undertaking research into graduates' careers, a topic which was considered to be one of the key areas not covered by the original project.

Taking a lead from the earlier 'Student Choice' project, a considerable amount of the present project's attention has been devoted to pursuing the goals of institutional self-study and evaluation (Patton 1982, Adelman and Alexander 1982). In keeping with this style of research, initial papers and preliminary reports have been circulated to an internal audience within the CCRG institutions; where several groups have met to discuss the findings and policy implications

arising from them. As an attempt to foster the opportunities for institutional self-study, the project has adopted a cyclical model of research (Spradley 1979) in preference to the conventional linear model. Consequently, rather than basing the work on a single period for defining the research problem, leading to a single data collection stage, followed by an analysis published in one long report, the project has followed, as far as possible, an alternative sequence of stages: tentative formation of research questions, preliminary fieldwork, analysis, short report, re-specification of research questions, further fieldwork, and so on. This cyclical model of research has facilitated a regular interchange between fieldwork and analysis, as well as the production of a number of interim papers and reports which have formed the basis of consensual approaches to data interpretation. As an example of this practice, before interpreting the results of the 'Beyond Graduation' survey, substantial amounts of preliminary findings were disseminated to college staff so that their interpretations of the material could be noted and collected during an extensive series of special interest discussion groups.

However, although an important aspect of the data collection and interpretation, self-study was not considered to be the only objective for the research. From the outset, it was envisaged that the inquiry needed to address a wider audience than that engaged throughout the fieldwork and initial interpretation stages of the research. Hence, in addition to helping participating colleges to know more about themselves and their students, the findings were also intended to influence and inform the much wider debate over the role and future of this type of institution within the overall higher education provision,

an objective particularly important at a time when there has been little Government direction for the colleges.

Research design

To enable an examination of the issues surrounding the economic relevance of colleges' non-teaching degree graduates, the research was designed and implemented in three stages. Each of these stages has a particular, though not a restrictive, relevance to each of the three sets of questions posed in the opening chapter: respectively, general questions covering the careers performance of college graduates; implications arising from the findings for policy development; and issues surrounding the wider graduate employment market. Thus, the three research stages, with their related set of objectives, were as follows:

1. interviews with members of the academic staff in colleges of higher education. As a way of preparing the ground for the policy and curricula context, interviews concerning the economic relevance of undergraduate non-teaching courses were held with the academic staff in colleges of higher education. Appendix B contains the interview schedule and fieldwork procedures adopted in this phase of the research and Chapter Three presents a summary of the main material to emerge from it.

2. an analysis of graduates' first destination statistics.

In order to give the study a wider comparative dimension, as well as to introduce themes which could be explored further through the above questionnaire, the first destination performances of university, polytechnic and college graduates were analysed and contrasted. The results of this analysis are reported in Chapter Four.

3. a postal survey of college graduates thirty months after leaving their colleges (the main stage). In order to provide the essential empirical foundation for studying graduates' employment experiences and careers perspectives, a postal questionnaire, 'Beyond Graduation' was developed and administered. A copy of this questionnaire and the appropriate covering letters are reproduced in Appendix A and the findings of the survey are presented in Chapters Five and Six.

The remaining sections of the present chapter offer further details of each of the three research stages in the order in which they were carried out.

Interviews with academic staff

As a condition for reflecting on the policy implications arising from the findings, it appeared necessary to ascertain the potential scope for institutional and curricula development as seen by

those most closely involved in devising and implementing them. In addition, as a preparation for examining graduates' early careers, it was considered essential that, before contacting former students, descriptions of college courses and services should first be collected from members of staff. Accordingly, between February and May, 1981, unstructured interviews (Cohen and Manion 1980) were conducted with members of staff in all six of the CCRG institutions. The interviews invited descriptive accounts and subjective assessments of how courses, services and college-community life may affect students' preparation for future employment. Thus, although it is recognized that the unstructured interview as a method of data collection entails difficulties in attaining comparability, reliability and validity (Cicourel 1964, Filstead et al 1970 and Selltiz et al 1977), it seemed well-suited to the task of gathering full and detailed expressions of staff interpretations of the curricula on offer.

As a general rule, these interviews lasted about an hour and were recorded along the lines recommended by Bogdan and Taylor (1975). They were normally conducted during a week's visit by the research fellow to each of the colleges, though special circumstances reduced the length of time spent in two colleges, and at the largest one, the interviews were carried out by both research fellows. In order to encourage informal and exploratory exchanges, a tightly structured schedule was avoided, although an attempt was made to broach five broad questions at some point in the interview. These were as follows:

1. How would you describe the main ways through which the college is currently attempting to prepare BA/BSc students

for work and increase their chances of obtaining satisfactory employment?

2. To what extent do you think the college is succeeding in its attempts to extend the students' 'marketability'?

3. To what extent do you think the college should be concerned with preparing students for employment?

4. With reference to the relation between higher education and work, would you see colleges of higher education as having a special contribution to make - as distinct from universities and polytechnics?

5. What weight do you think students attach to occupational reasons when deciding to enter the college and when choosing different course options throughout their college life?

Examples of the follow-up probes subsumed under the five questions listed above are provided in the flexible interview schedule reproduced in Appendix B. General observations, informal conversations and small discussion groups were used to collect supplementary material. In all, forty-seven individual interviews and seven discussion groups were held.

For the pre-arranged interviews and discussion groups, members of staff were not randomly selected. To enable information to be gathered on the rationales supporting new courses and careers services,

it was necessary to speak to those most directly responsible for initiating and implementing such new developments. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to include as broad a cross-section of staff opinions and subject areas as possible. More detailed information on the guidelines for selecting interviewees and for conducting the interviews is provided in the fieldwork procedure notes presented in Appendix B.

The staff interviews part of the research project was carried out in the six CCRG member institutions listed above, all of which were former colleges of education. As well as providing a valuable cross-section in terms of geographical location and size of institution, this group of colleges contained a useful variation in degrees of diversificaton - from one institution with very little diversification to another with over 60 per cent of its students on non-teaching degree programmes. It also spanned a wide spectrum of religious affiliations: on the basis of constituent colleges rather than institutions, it included three non-denominational, five Anglican, one Methodist, one Catholic and one Free Church college. On the other hand, the sample of the six CCRG institutions entailed slight biases towards university rather than CNAA validation (four of the former, two of the latter) and towards voluntary rather than LEA maintained status (four of the former, one of the latter and one an amalgamation of a voluntary and LEA college).

First destinations analysis

In an attempt to study the early careers of college graduates, the bulk of the thesis is based on information derived from the questionnaire, 'Beyond Graduation'. Covering graduates' experiences and expectations during their two years since leaving college, this questionnaire was administered to 1979 graduates from sixteen colleges of higher education, including the six CCRG institutions. However, for two main reasons it was considered that a preliminary and complementary analysis of the first destinations of a wider cohort of 1979 graduates would also be worth undertaking.

Firstly, subsequent questionnaire responses can only be fully understood when seen against the background of the overall pattern of first destination trends for a larger number of graduates in a particular year group. In this way, it was possible to place college graduates in a comparative context with university and polytechnic graduates, at least for the period covered by first destination surveys (six months after graduation). Due to the restrictions on resources, it was not feasible to extend this comparative dimension by administering the 'Beyond Graduation' questionnaire to graduates from universities and polytechnics.

Secondly, as initial steps in exploring the questions posed in the previous chapter, the first destinations statistics are a valuable source of information in their own right, despite their inherent limitations which are clearly set out by Williams (1973a). Consequently, this stage of the research concentrates on the first

destination returns of the 1979 graduates, thus enabling any emerging issues to be extended and elaborated in the subsequent analysis of the questonnaire results.

This phase of the research is based on three sources of information:

1. secondary sources within the available literature;

2. biographical details collected, in preparation for the 'Beyond Graduation' Survey, from the registries of the sixteen colleges concerning each of their 1979 graduates in the survey sample (viz. details of gender, 'A' level subjects and grades, degree awarded and classification, subjects studied at college, and first destinations categories, when known);

3. the 1979 pilot survey of first destinations carried out by ACACHE.

These sources contain several weaknesses which should caution against making firm generalizations, and counsel in favour of tentative hypotheses which appear to be worthy of fuller analysis. For example, the second and third sources include only two institutions representative of those colleges which did not offer some element of teacher education, the proto-polytechnics. In the total, however, the colleges included in the second and third sources provided a reasonably sound cross-section of colleges of higher education: two

proto-polytechnics, six combination colleges and ten former colleges of education. Ten of these institutions were validated by universities, six by CNAA, and three had courses validated by both. All the proto-polytechnic and combination colleges were LEA maintained, as were four of the former colleges of education. (Further details on the colleges included in the second source are presented in the following section.) The very fact that any analysis is possible is almost solely due to the speed and efficiency with which ACACHE mounted and collated a first destination survey. It should also be noted that this study is not concerned with the total output surveyed by ACACHE. It ignores, for example, BEds, PGCEs, HNDs, Diplomates, and concentrates only on first degree graduates with non-teaching Bachelor Degrees.

'Beyond Graduation' Survey

Although highly sceptical of survey methods, Cicourel (1964) does allow for the possibility that they may be useful "in providing simple descriptive material of a non-threatening type from a large sample of individuals for some practical purpose" (p.115). Accordingly, although limited funding and the nature of the data requirements virtually dictated the necessity of applying survey methods, much of its usage was restricted to collecting descriptive material on graduates' careers. When information of a potentially more threatening nature was required, open-ended questions were deliberately chosen to give the respondent as much scope as possible for expressing individual nuances and outlooks (Sudman and Bradburn 1982). In

addition, the questionnaire included a number of attitudinal items which were based on statements collected from students and graduates during the design stage.

Concentrating on former students with diversified degrees, the main purpose of this survey was to document their experiences and attitudes since leaving college, in order that the contribution of colleges' curricula and services to students' careers could be evaluated. Broadly speaking, the survey sought to provide an empirical basis for continuing the exploration of links between employment and higher education as supplied by the colleges. To do this, as noted in the previous chapter, there was an obvious need to extend the available knowledge on graduates' early careers beyond that of the first destination statistics collated in annual reports. Consequently, the information collected through the 'Beyond Graduation' survey was intended both to provide details on the external indices of graduates' careers thirty months after graduation, as well as to record their own personal accounts of college curricula, occupations entered and long-term career prospects.

Within the external indices area, topics of particular interest included the categories and levels of employment obtained, the connections between careers and subjects studied, patterns of occupational mobility, job descriptions and methods used in searching for employment. In selecting the more attitudinal items, priority was given to levels of satisfaction with jobs and career, perceptions of courses vis-a-vis marketability and occupational performance, attitudes to career choice and prospects, and accounts of the problems and

opportunities experienced in the immediate years following graduation. Additionally, key biographical details (e.g. gender, classification of degree, 'A' levels, parental occupations etc.) were considered to be essential for any analysis of the relations between graduates' higher education and their subsequent careers.

During May and June 1981, a postal questionnaire 'Beyond Graduation' (see Appendix A) was designed to reflect and cover the areas of interest presented above. Two sources of information were particularly influential in shaping the questionnaire: the interview material collected from college lecturers (see Chapter Three) and existing instruments used in previous surveys, especially Kelsall et al (1970) and Williamson (1981). In addition, preliminary drafts of the questionnaire were circulated to college staff and a small number of graduates; many of their comments and suggestions were incorporated within the final version.

Instead of taking up valuable space within the questionnaire, some information was derived from alternative sources. College registries and careers departments, for instance, were asked to provide data on 'A' level subjects with grades, degree programmes and classifications, subjects studied and last known addresses. The questionnaire sought the remaining information through a mixture of closed and open-ended items, the latter being mainly concerned with details of career routes and evaluations of college courses and current employment. Unless they wished to indicate their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews, graduates were not asked to supply their names<1>.

Practical considerations and the life expectancy of the project necessitated that the subjects of the 'Beyond Graduation' inquiry should be the 1979 graduates. Although this group had the disadvantage of being the colleges' first significant output from diversified degree courses, which often meant that the information relating to their initial destinations was at times incomplete, it offered the advantage of providing details of early career patterns over a reasonable period of time, namely thirty months following graduation. A survey of the 1980 graduates, the only feasible alternative, would have been limited to eighteen months, a period, which was thought to be too short to capture an adequate picture of emerging careers.

Two different samples of 1979 college graduates received the questionnaire:

1. the CCRG sample, which consisted of all non-teaching degree graduates from the four CCRG member institutions with a 1979 diversified degree output (i.e. BA/BSc/BHum). Table 2.1 indicates that the overall target sample for this distribution was 357. It also sets out the numbers in each of the college sub-samples. All the colleges in this sample were former colleges of education: three were voluntary and university validated, one was an amalgamation of voluntary and LEA maintained colleges with courses validated by both CNAA and a local university.

Table 2.1 Details of sample and response rates for CCRG non-BEd 1979 graduates

Type of College	Institution	Population	Target Sample (TS)	TS.as % of Pop.	Responses N	Responses %
Former Colleges of Education	College 1	56	56	100	34	61
	College 2	136	136	100	90	66
	College 3	155	155	100	69	45
	College 4	10	10	100	7	70
All CCRG Colleges		357	357	100	200	56

2. the ACACHE sample, which, in an attempt to provide comparative data for the CCRG sample, consisted of a percentage of non-BEd graduates from a wider group of colleges and institutes of higher education. At the end of 1979, ACACHE collected first destination details of 1,052 non-teaching degree graduates from seventeen colleges and institutes of higher education. Towards the end of 1981, the research team and ACACHE agreed to administer the 'Beyond Graduation' questionnaire to a sample of these graduates. Fifteen of the original seventeen institutions were invited to participate (the remaining two had already been covered by the CCRG sample described above) and twelve agreed to do so, providing a total target population for the ACACHE distribution of 805 1979 graduates.

As Table 2.2 illustrates, in the ACACHE distribution two of the institutions were 'proto-polytechnics' and accounted for 416 graduates; six were 'combination colleges' and accounted for 270 graduates; four were former colleges of education and accounted for 119 graduates. The two proto-polytechnics were CNAA validated and LEA maintained. Of the six combination colleges, all of which were LEA maintained, three were

CNAA validated, two university validated and one had courses validated by both. Of the four former colleges of education, three were LEA maintained and one voluntary, one of each were validated by CNAA and universities, and two by both.

Table 2.2 Details of samples and response rates for 1979 non-BEd graduates in the ACACHE distribution

Type of College	Institution	Population	Target Sample (TS)	TS as % of Population	Responses N	Responses %
Former Colleges of Education	College 5	6	6	100	4	67
	College 6	30	27	90	11	41
	College 7	31	25	81	11	44
	College 8	52	42	81	21	50
All Former Colleges of Education		119	100	84	47	47
Combination Colleges	College 9	13	5	38	3	60
	College 10	46	17	37	8	47
	College 11	64	24	38	12	50
	College 12	60	22	37	9	41
	College 13	46	17	37	6	35
	College 14	41	13	32	3	23
All Combination Colleges		270	98	36	41	42
Proto-Poly's.	College 15	167	40	24	20	50
	College 16	249	60	24	19	32
All Proto-Polytechnics		416	100	24	39	39
All ACACHE Colleges		805	298	37	127	43

When selecting a sampling procedure for the ACACHE group (sample (2) above), two objectives were particularly important: (a) it should include sufficient numbers from former colleges of education to provide a comparative data set for the four CCRG institutions (sample (1) above), all of which were former colleges of education; (b) it should include a reasonable representation of graduates from the other two types of college. Having considered a variety of procedures, it was decided that a broadly proportionate random sample of 100 graduates should be selected from each of the three college types. Within the ACACHE sample, this provided the potential for a sizeable representation of graduates from former colleges of education and a useful, if not quite so strong, representation of graduates from the remaining types. The total size of the target sample for the ACACHE distribution amounted to 298. Details of how this number was spread across individual colleges and types of college are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.3 shows the extent to which a composite sample derived from the CCRG and ACACHE samples can be taken as representative of the total known population of 1979 college graduates with non-teaching degrees. In the absence of any information on the entire group of 1979 college graduates, ACACHE's first destinations survey of 1,052 graduates, supplemented by 260 graduates covered by the CCRG but not by ACACHE, constitute the only available data on this population. Relative to the percentages of the total known population in each type of college the target sample for the former colleges of education is over-representative, while that of the remaining types, especially the proto-polytechnics, are clearly under-representative. Consequently,

without giving appropriate weighting to the latter types, the composite sample cannot be considered unreservedly representative of the total known population.

Table 2.3 Details of 1979 non-BEd composite sample and response rates

		Former Colls. of Education	Combination Colleges	Proto-Polys.	All Colleges
Total Known Population	N	626	270	416	1312
	%	48	20	32	100
Target Sample (TS)	N	457	98	100	655
	%	70	15	15	100
TS as % of Total Known Population		73	36	24	50
Number of responses		247	41	39	327
Response Rates	%	54	42	39	50

However, within each type of college, the representativeness of the sample deserves greater credence, especially for the former colleges of education. In this type, three quarters of the known population were covered by the survey and there are no grounds to suggest that the one quarter not included differs in terms of gender, age, size and status of college, validating bodies and so on. It should be noted, however, that the majority of the 1979 known population of diversified degree graduates were from voluntary, university validated institutions, and the composite sample, thus, reflects this bias. Although the target samples for the remaining types are smaller, as one in three and one in four random selections from colleges which appear typical of their type, they do provide the

basis for a reasonable, if cautious, degree of generalizability. Of course, all the above points require confirmation in the light of the rate of responses received for each type of college.

Between September 1981 and March 1982, copies of 'Beyond Graduation' were administered to both samples. Some of the questionnaires were sent directly to graduates' last known addresses, but more often than not, forwarding questionnaires to parental addresses for redirection was found to be a more reliable method of establishing contact. Questionnaires were accompanied by free post return labels and covering letters, copies of which are reproduced in Appendix A. To avoid exposing recipients to extraneous and irregular biases, it was decided not to use covering letters signed by members of the college careers service. Similarly, the practice of contacting graduates through professional registers - a method which the UMS study (Williamson 1981) found particularly useful - was rejected. Apart from appearing less applicable to the careers of college graduates, it was thought that this method could bias the responses in favour of the most successful graduates. One reminder letter (see Appendix A) with a further copy of the questionnaire was sent to initial non-respondents. In addition, more recent information on the whereabouts of non-respondents was sought from those respondents who volunteered for a follow-up interview. Unfortunately, this 'snowballing' exercise, found useful by Kelsall et al (1970) but not by the UMS study (Williamson 1981), had a negligible impact on the overall response rate.

Although the overall response rate for the composite sample reached 50 per cent (Table 2.3), it should be noted that some variation

exists between the two constituent samples: 56 per cent for the CCRG sample (Table 2.1), 43 per cent for the ACACHE sample (Table 2.2). The greater response rate of the CCRG sample, which consists exclusively of former colleges of education, is partly attributable to the tendency for graduates from this type of college to respond at a slightly higher rate than their counterparts in other college types: e.g. in Table 2.2, contrast the 47 per cent return for former colleges of education with the 42 and 39 per cent for combination colleges and proto-polytechnics respectively. (For further evidence of this tendency, contrast the proportion of 'unknown' graduates in each college type in Table 4.1.)

Nevertheless, this reason alone seems inadequate, since it fails to explain why the former colleges of education in the ACACHE sample only attained 47 per cent compared with 56 per cent in the CCRG sample (Table 2.1). This difference may be due to the stronger rapport that existed between some of the CCRG colleges and the researcher, which allowed the latter to exhort several members of staff to search out more recent information on the whereabouts of their former students.

It is also felt that the smaller response rates for certain individual colleges (e.g. College 3 in the CCRG sample, Table 2.1) may be explained by the absence of an organized procedure for maintaining records of their graduates' careers. To some extent, the rather unreliable state of some colleges' information on the 1979 leavers is understandable, since, in many cases, it was not until 1979 that the

first diversified degree output demonstrated a definite need for maintaining records and contact with former students.

Overall then, given such difficulties in reaching former students, owing to the high degree of graduates' geographical mobility at this stage in their careers, the incidence of 'non-contact' is probably much greater than the 7 per cent of questionnaires returned 'not known at this address'. As a result, the composite response rate is considered satisfactory for this type of postal questionnaire. By way of comparison, it closely matches the 53 per cent achieved in the Williamson (1981) survey of university and polytechnic graduates.

Valid analysis of the data also depends upon showing that the proportions of respondents from each college is a fair reflection of the college based constituency of the 1979 graduate population. For the former colleges of education, Table 2.4 shows that, with the exception of a slight imbalance between College 2 and College 3, the distribution of respondents throughout the colleges closely parallels the distribution of the graduate population from each college. The Table also reveals that the respondents from the combination colleges similarly represent the college constituecy of the original population, but for the proto-polytechnics, a more significant discrepancy is apparent.

Table 2.4 Distribution of respondents and populations of 1979 non-BEd graduates from each college in the composite sample

Type of college	College	Population		Response Group	
		N	%	N	%
Former Colleges of Education	1	56	12	34	14
	2	136	29	90	36
	3	155	32	69	28
	4	10	2	7	3
	5	6	1	4	2
	6	30	6	11	4
	7	31	7	11	4
	8	52	11	21	9
	ALL	476	100	247	100
Combination Colleges	9	13	5	3	7
	10	46	17	8	20
	11	64	24	12	29
	12	60	22	9	22
	13	46	17	6	15
	14	41	15	3	7
	ALL	270	100	41	100
Proto-Polytechnics	15	167	40	20	52
	16	249	60	19	38
	ALL	416	100	39	100

Consequently, as a result of the size and nature of the response rate, the case for using the response group to make generalizations relating to the 1979 graduates from former colleges of education remains sound. However, it should be stressed that, because of their less representative samples and response rates, a similar claim cannot be made for the two remaining types of college. It is intended that the use of the data collected from these latter types should be restricted to the illustration of tentative comparisons.

In order to confirm the above conclusion, it is necessary to ensure that the respondents are a fair representation of the appropriate population and that no grounds exist for believing that respondents systematically differ from non-respondents. To this end, in addition to the college variations discussed above, direct response bias checks were carried out for the following variables: gender, degree programme and classification, total 'A' level score, discipline areas studied at college, and careers advisers' reports on first destinations.

For the former colleges of education, there was little evidence of differential response rates between men and women, types of programmes, degree classifications, discipline areas and 'A' level scores. However, in common with respondents from other college types, graduates classified by careers advisers as 'unknown' were less likely than those otherwise classified to return completed questionnaires (see Table 2.5). Although not a feature of all colleges, this is perhaps not a surprising result, since it indicates increased difficulties in contacting those graduates whose initial circumstances were unknown and secondly, a tendency for those unwilling to participate in first destination surveys to adopt the same approach to subsequent surveys. Nevertheless, this need not be viewed as an overriding bias, since several previous analyses have been conducted on the assumption that 'unknown graduates' tend to be evenly distributed among the remaining categories (e.g. Tarsh 1982) and Williams (1973a) has concluded "that no assumption can be made that a particularly high proportion of the unknown category are unemployed" (p.26). If anything, it may well be a marginal advantage in the colleges' favour for this group to be

under-represented: 'unknown' graduates who responded to the present survey tended to perform slightly lower than average on a number of key employment and levels of satisfaction variables. This, of course, says nothing about 'unknown' graduates who remain unknown.

Table 2.5 College careers advisers' classification of first destinations of 1979 non-BEd respondents and non-respondents

	Former Colleges of Education		Proto-Polytechnics		Combination Colleges	
	Resp.	Non-Resp.	Resp.	Non-Resp.	Resp.	Non-Resp.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Teacher Training	30	22	13	3	22	9
Permanent home employment	30	20	44	25	32	19
Unknown	23	45	21	57	22	47
Unemployed	4	1	5	0	10	0
Other Training	4	1	13	0	3	4
All other categories	9	11	4	15	11	21
TOTALS (100%)	247	210	39	61	41	57

Within the combination colleges, graduates in the arts discipline area and those who followed a Bachelor of Arts degree programme were reluctant to respond, while within the proto-polytechnics social studies graduates and graduates with Upper Second class Honours tended to be slightly under-represented.

On the whole, it is considered that the response bias checks are very satisfactory and broadly confirm the conclusions reached

earlier. In the case of the former colleges of education, detailed analyses can proceed with a high degree of confidence.

Many of the questionnaire items were pre-coded, others were coded upon receipt of the completed returns, often by means of existing frames such as, the occupational classifications used in the Qualified Manpower Follow-up Survey (see Williamson 1981); the subject categories presented in Appendix C; and a modified version of the first destinations classifications used by careers staff in all three sectors of higher education. Having punched all the coded data on to cards, these were submitted to a computer and an SPSS system file was created. Reports containing the preliminary frequencies of the coded data, as well as copies of the open-ended comments, were circulated to all colleges involved in the survey. Discussions aimed at exploring initial interpretations of the preliminary findings were held at most of the CCRG colleges and these have proved a valuable source of ideas for further analysis and commentary. The presentaion and interpretation of the results of the 'Beyond Graduation' survey are set out in Chapters Five and Six.

Summary

In the opening section of the chapter, the theoretical and policy grounds for conducting the empirical research into the particular case of higher education provision were outlined and the adoption of a methodological approach similar to that described by Fay

(1975) as the 'critical model of social science' was proposed. In an attempt to apply this approach, it was described how in the data collection and analysis attempts had been made to juxtapose interpretive qualitative accounts with the quantitative responses to pre- and post- coded indices based on the researcher's constructs. In exemplifying the methods of data collection and analysis, it was recognized that the endeavour to apply the adopted methodological approach was not without compromises and limitations. Having described the context and style, in which the empirical work was carried out, the research design, comprising of three main phases, was outlined:

1. interviews with academic staff at six colleges of higher education (all former colleges of education);

2. an analysis of the first destination statistics and other biographical details for 1979 non-teaching degree graduates from eighteen colleges of higher education (two proto-polytechnics, six combination colleges and ten former colleges of higher education);

3. a postal survey of 1979 non-teaching degree graduates from sixteen colleges of higher education (two proto-polytechnics, six combination colleges and eight former colleges of education). The survey was administered to graduates thirty months after they had left their colleges and the overall response rate was 50 per cent.

With regard to the postal survey, as a result of carrying out response bias checks and examinations of the samples involved, it was concluded that the replies from respondents from former colleges of education could be taken as representative of the wider group of 1979 graduates from this type of institution. The responses from the sample of the other two types of colleges of higher education should be used for illustrative purposes only.

NOTES

<1> Unfortunately, because of limited resources, it subsequently proved impossible to carry out these interviews.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDENTS' CAREERS AND THE COLLEGE CURRICULA: STAFF ACCOUNTS

Nature and purpose of staff interviews

An essential prerequisite for any evaluation of an educational provision is a preliminary consideration of the aims and values attributed to it by those engaged in its design and implementation. Thus, in this particular case, in order to assess the extent of the employment and economic benefits accruing from college degrees, there was a prior need to enquire how members of staff perceived college curricula and services to be contributing, if at all, to the development of their graduates' career prospects. Only in the light of accounts of existing careers-related curricula and policy can the degree to which they may be extending the employability of college graduates be evaluated.

Consequently, as outlined in Chapter Two, by way of providing a policy and curricula context in which to locate the careers of diversified degree graduates, a number of interviews were conducted with members of academic staff in colleges of higher education. In doing so, it should not be construed that internal academic staff are held to be the main agents of policy formation. As demonstrated in

Chapter One, official bodies like the DES wield considerable power and control over the direction of policy and curricula developments in the colleges. However, on account of their regular, first-hand experience and knowledge of the colleges' operations, internal academic staff are also key personnel in the devising and implementing of institutional and curricula developments. For this reason, it was felt that their perspectives would provide a useful opportunity for opening up an exploration of many of the issues central to the study.

Before setting out a summary of the main themes arising from the interviews, a number of important caveats, which set limits to the scope of the present undertaking, need to be borne in mind. Firstly, this part of the study was intended to be a general and introductory overview, and not an exploration of specific details. Hence, many of the subtleties expressed by individuals are sacrificed, perhaps unavoidably. Secondly, variations between colleges are not highlighted and different proposals and viewpoints are not located in their college contexts. This is an important point since the issues and viewpoints expressed were not uniformly distributed across all the colleges. Finally, in order to isolate contrasting accounts, the views advanced by staff are summarized in the form of 'ideal types'. A typification constructed in this way is not 'ideal' in any prescriptive or moral sense, but in a descriptive and epistemological one; hence it is formed by deliberately accentuating certain features of a given reality in order to make that reality accessible to conceptualization, comparison and analysis. In the process, some injustice to the complexity of the given reality is inevitable. For the purposes of this analysis, it should be stressed that viewpoints and not people are typifed in this

way: a single person may consistently and simultaneously articulate elements of several different 'ideal types', which are rarely mutually exclusive dichotomies.

The central section of this chapter outlines the ways in which members of staff described and explained the salient policies through which their college was attempting to assist the student in preparing for employment. It documents staff perceptions of the shortcomings of these policies. Since policies do not exist in isolation from fundamental educational attitudes, or from their material circumstances, a limited attempt is made in the following sections to extract from staff accounts the main attitudes and external circumstances which seem to impinge on the development of career-related policies described in the main part of the chapter.

Underlying views on higher education and the economy

One of the most significant factors likely to influence the efficacy of a college's contribution to career development is the degree to which members of staff share a working consensus on what ought to be the relationship between higher education and the economy. Among other things, staff were asked, 'to what extent do you think that higher education at a college should be concerned with preparation for employment?' It was an interesting feature of the replies to this question that they were almost unanimously couched in terms of the benefits to the individual student; the alternative perspective - the benefits to the economy and society at large were rarely mentioned. A

summary of their responses concerning the former perspective is presented below:

1. At one level, there was a good deal of indifference to the whole question of the connections between higher education and employment. This approach was more often expressed as a practitioner's typical state-of-being, rather than a rationally thought-out point of view. Occasionally, it was voiced as an introspective observation ("well, to be honest, it's not something I think about a lot"), or sometimes as an attribution to third parties ("most lecturers are apathetic to questions of relevance to employment, they are simply more interested in getting on with the business of teaching").

2. There was fairly widespread support for what may be called the 'liberal intrinsic' view of higher education and the economy. Typically coined, 'education for education's own sake', this view emphasized such goals as 'developing the whole person', the 'quality of life' and the 'pursuit of pure knowledge'. Students should be able to enjoy three years of cultural enrichment without being unduly worried by the pressures of career considerations and employment demands. The overriding objective is the refining and sharpening of minds; any 'spin-off' this may have for employers is incidental and should not detract from the main purpose of imparting 'knowledge for its own sake'.

3. A similar position was an 'anti-marketing' line, according to which, colleges should rebuff the moulding of students to suit employers' needs in favour of fostering students who would be capable

of initiating social change through imaginative and critical thinking. Students, therefore, should not be encouraged to see themselves as 'marketable'.

4. A 'can't be done' argument claimed that employers' requirements, which include both cognitive and personality attributes, are so capricious as to confound attempts to promote them in the college curricula. Various 'lack of fit' accounts of education and the economy were used to support this argument.

5. A 'future state' position warned against over-reacting to the fashionable criteria of relevance to economic needs on the grounds that this would leave the colleges unprepared for the possible future demands of education for unemployment and leisure.

6. An expedient 'window-dressing' approach was also advocated. This maintained that colleges should be seen to be responding to the dominant vocabularies of economic efficiency. However, to go too far in actually implementing economy-orientated policies would be undesirable and impractical.

7. A small number of staff presented a 'vocationalist extrinsic' view, according to which, higher education at a college should offer students knowledge and skills which are directly applicable to occupational selection and performance.

8. Other staff felt that a provision of 'careers education' could make a major contribution to the economic relevance of higher

education at a college. This perspective maintained that the preparation for employment is a prime responsibility of higher education, but unlike the vocationalist view, this need not necessarily entail the teaching of applied vocational subjects. It could be achieved by combining a general liberal education with a strong emphasis on 'careers education', including short, broadly-vocational courses as career aspirations crystallize.

Perceived models of institutional development

A second set of opinions influencing the nature and extent of careers work in the colleges, reflects staff perceptions of the need to develop colleges of higher education as distinctive institutions. These perceptions were often presented as being fundamental to the whole problem of institutional survival. With particular reference to the relation between higher education and work, members of staff were asked whether or not they thought that colleges of higher education have a special contribution to make, as distinct say, from universities and polytechnics. Again, by way of summarizing the variety of responses, a number of 'ideal typical' viewpoints may be elicited.

1. The monotechnic teacher education model. Colleges should remain monotechnic, reject forms of diversification, concentrate their energies and resources in areas where they have developed expertise (i.e. teacher education) and thereby safeguard a genuine claim to institutional distinctiveness. This would avoid increasing the vulnerability of colleges by reducing direct competition with

universities and polytechnics, especially in view of the impending fall in the number of applicants to higher education.

2. The 'ideal' university model. According to this model, the propagation of too many distinguishing features could place the survival of the colleges in jeopardy. Such features would serve only to draw attention to the discrepancies between colleges and other institutions of higher education, differential status being a likely consequence. A more promising policy would be to cast the colleges in the mould of a small university, with all its perceived characteristics, e.g. degrees of high academic standards, staff involved in research, a university-styled careers service, emphasis on the study of 'pure' subjects and so on. These qualities would of course be supplementary to the specialist provision of initial teacher education.

3. The 'ideal' polytechnic model. Building on the vocationalist view presented earlier, it was argued that, by offering degrees and degree equivalents in applied subjects, colleges should aspire to transform themselves from monotechnics into small polytechnics (as in the original conception of 'polytechnics', prior to the alleged process of academic drift). Of the two main characteristics inherited from a history of teacher training - vocational preparation within a liberal arts tradition - this model advocated the former in preference to the latter. This was found to be a minority viewpoint.

4. The university model plus traditional college qualities. The colleges should emulate the status-enhancing aspects of a small university but simultaneously protect and promote their own declared traditional qualities as distinguishing elements (e.g. smaller size, the more reserved personality attributes of the student intake, closer personal attention and involvement, more favourable accommodation facilities, higher proportion of teaching time, a special association with the 'caring professions' etc). A similar variant was to eschew the need for distinguishing qualities, and recommend "doing the same job as universities, but use the traditional qualities of a college to do the job better for certain types of students".

5. Alternative model. Instead of merely reasserting the conventional idiosyncracies of colleges, which may be of spurious value if not actually counter-productive, this model proposed to develop the colleges as providers of an alternative, and positively distinctive, education. One member of staff described the reasoning behind this model in terms of a business analogy. In the same way as there is no market for a uniform pen, so there is no market for a uniform graduate. The labour market does not require the endless imitation of a stereotype graduate, but a diverse range of contrasting types to meet unfilled gaps in demand. Consequently, both to survive as a degree awarding institution, and to offer students equal opportunites in the labour market, colleges of higher education should not attempt to duplicate the kind of graduates and degrees more ably produced in other institutions of higher education. Moreover, according to several staff, colleges should prepare their students for employment by equipping them with "something extra", "something other than that which

is available elsewhere".

One proposal for "something extra" which was particularly germane to the question of the colleges' contribution to preparation for employment, suggested a form of higher education which would strongly accentuate careers education. Colleges should offer a general liberal education in the context of a special emphasis on students' career development and awareness of the world of work. Although the main courses on offer would foster skills that were adaptable and transferable, short introductory courses in more vocationally-related areas would be made available as the students' career orientations emerge and develop. In contrast to this proposed speciality for colleges, universities were posited as the appropriate institutions for conducting research and high level disciplinary development ('working at the boundaries of knowledge') and polytechnics for teaching applied subjects in response to local and immediate economic needs.

In addition to the above perspectives, corresponding forms of 'indifferentism' and 'the expediency approach' were also offered as approaches to the issue of whether or not colleges need to nurture distinguishing qualities within the higher education sector. However, these need not be rehearsed here.

Perceived constraints

Members of staff frequently alluded to the importance of recognizing the variety of external and internal factors which may restrict the potential for new initiatives, including those concerned with extending the colleges' contribution to careers and economic relevance. Factors which were cited with some regularity included:

- having to develop courses and programmes which were constrained by the academic and teaching strengths of existing staff, especially in view of the shortage of funds to support the recruitment of new staff;

- the general effects of limited financial resources in the context of the current climate of economic stringency;

- the problems of obtaining validation for innovatory curricula. At a time when most colleges required a speedy implementation of their diversified courses, it was quite natural that only 'safe' courses were proposed in order to minimize the risks of rejection;

- the difficulties involved in obtaining the permission of Regional Advisory Councils for particular course developments;

- the distractions associated with the pressing and frequently traumatic difficulties caused by various forms of institutional amalgamation and association;

- the need to preserve satisfactory levels of student recruitment;

- the establishment of a working consensus among members of staff.

Curricula as contributions to career development

Members of staff were asked to describe their perceptions of the main ways through which their college was attempting to assist the students' career prospects and preparation for employment. They were also invited to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these attempts. Their replies took many different forms: some amounted to post hoc rationalizations of established practices, several took the form of explanatory accounts of recent innovations, others looked to the future and focused on the issues and obstacles associated with proposals currently under discussion. The main policies and their perceived problems, are summarized below.

One response suggested that just by offering a degree of good academic standing, the college was adequately assisting the career prospects of its students. Apart from supporting the provision of a careers service, proponents of this view argued that the opportunity to attain a degree was a sufficient contribution to students' employability. To do more than this was educationally undesirable and technically impractical, owing to the uncertainty of employers' needs (see earlier 'can't be done' argument).

This view was often criticized for being naively unrealistic. It failed to recognize that, on the basis of their degrees alone,

college graduates would tend to be seriously outclassed in the labour market. Too many negative factors were 'stacked against them'. Among those mentioned were employers' tendency to attribute superior status to university degrees, especially those of the established universities; the long-standing university connections of many industrial and professional employers which tend to have self-perpetuating influences on recruitment practices; the unfamiliarity and suspicion with which employers may view colleges and institutes of higher education; predelictions to stereotype the college intake as 'third best'; 'having inferior 'A' levels', 'timid', and as 'thwarted teachers'. To compensate for these and other disadvantages, the colleges have a fundamental duty to offer the students some form of further assistance in terms of employability. Failing this, the colleges could stand accused of recruiting students without shouldering some of the responsibility for satisfying students' expectations of enhanced career prospects.

The 'can't be done' argument was met with several counter arguments. Firstly, the difficulties associated with specifying and predicting employers' needs and criteria do not invalidate attempts to develop a student's career awareness, orientation and information. Secondly, 'can't be done' arguments tend to reject employment-related perspectives because it is said they fail to specify a uniform type of graduate and employer. Rejecting the need for such a specification; supporters of careers-orientated curricula maintain that colleges should recognize the existence of different types of employers and respond appropriately to their requirements for a range of graduate types. Thirdly, for a significant proportion of graduate jobs, it is

possible to identify cognitive and social skills which possess widespread currency and appeal. Cognitive skills included numeracy, communication skills, problem solving abilities and the capacity to interpret data. With regard to personality attributes, while at a superficial level it may appear that there are contradictory messages emanating from employers (compliance or initiative?), there seems little doubt that such qualities as being able to work constructively and imaginatively within the context of organizational constraints are commonly sought. One member of staff relayed a description of a kind of graduate often sought by employers:

> ..somebody who will conform sufficiently to make the organization function effectively and yet will not lose their imagination and individuality, but will come to us with possibilities that are feasible, based on an understanding of how we operate.

As a result of the above arguments, several staff would conclude that it was both practical and desirable for the colleges to do something more than just offer a degree and a careers advisory service. Efforts should be made to develop careers awareness, cognitive abilities and social skills appropriate to employment demands.

The bulk of the BA and BEd subjects offered at all six CCRG institutions were often described as 'general liberal arts', rather than 'vocationally-orientated' courses. They were seen as specializing in 'pure' rather than 'applied' knowledge. It was not surprising therefore that a large proportion of the staff should accentuate the value of 'liberal' and 'pure' subjects as a major contribution to students' preparation for employment. Several incidental benefits and

career routes were aligned with particular subjects (e.g. History for archivists, English for journalists, Film and Drama for careers in the media, Drama for developing self-confidence and interviewing techniques etc.), but such connections were generally seen as the exceptions which prove the rule. The more usual view was that such subjects promote a broad range of adaptable and flexible skills which may be transferred to a wide variety of occupational settings. The skills mentioned included communication skills, data interpretaton and analysis, presentaton of an argument, the capacity to work as part of a team, problem solving skills and so on. It was often suggested that the acquisition of such skills coupled with the pursuit of a 'pure' body of knowledge, was a far more effective preparation for future employment than a narrow vocational training, which can easily become defunct and outdated in a time of rapid technological change. Consequently, several staff argued that the colleges were in the business of providing a general higher education as an essential foundation for more specific vocational training after graduation. However, different views were held on the extent to which these general skills were being developed as conscious attempts to enhance the employabilty of students.

Although there was a good deal of sympathy for the 'generalist' view, particularly if allied to other contributory policies, to persevere with it as the main and only contribution to assisting students in the labour market was held by several staff to be inadequate and shortsighted. Since a prestigious liberal education was generally considered to be the hallmark of distinction and preserve of many university graduates, nothing 'extra' was being offered to college

graduates to offset the many disadvantages they face in the labour market.

Although few, a number of slightly more vocationally-related courses were offered in the colleges (e.g. Recreational Management, Youth and Community Studies, Business Studies, Organizational Behaviour). The view was expressed that the colleges could extend students' employability if more vocational courses were made available. In the main, it was considered that these should have a broad interdisciplinary and theoretical base but applied to a specific range of occupational outlets.

Differences of opinion were evident, however, with respect to the kinds of occupations towards which colleges should be directing their energies. While some expounded the desirability of responding to the occupational needs of the commercial sector, where greater opportunites in the labour market were said to exist, others thought that an emphasis on the 'caring professions' was a more suitable vocational orientation for the colleges. This would allow institutions to draw upon a wealth of experience in teacher education, and in some cases, a Christian tradition.

Critics were dubious that such courses would be instrumental in extending students' employability and feared a duplication of work in other sectors, especially the polytechnics. Misgivings about the possibility of overcoming the obstacles that stood in the way of mounting such courses were very prevalent. These included the lack of existing teaching staff with the appropriate expertise, the difficulty

of obtaining RAC approval, more complicated validation problems, and an absence of staff consensus.

As a further description of colleges' contribution to career development, it was claimed that a distinctive career benefit arose from the opportunity to combine courses in ways which were not possible elsewhere. The advantages were variously described: "it is possible to take one subject for personal satisfaction, the other for career reasons"; "one which extends general skills, while the other is more occupationally-focused"; or alternatively two or three subjects which provide considerable breadth. Such combinations were deemed to offer students a chance of obtaining a distinctive 'portfolio' in the job market. At one college where combined subjects were organized on a modular basis, it was proposed that students should be given a sufficient range of courses to construct a programme which reflected their developing career intentions and interests.

Other staff, however, were sceptical of the uniqueness of the course combinations and thus the associated benefits to job prospects. Furthermore, the combinations with the most plausible claims to distinctiveness, and arguably, those most likely to prove attractive to employers, were frequently found to be unpopular with students (e.g. arts courses with maths or science). Suggested reasons for this unpopularity included habitualized commitment to either side of the 'two cultures' divide, the continuation of subjects studied at 'A' level; and the fear of failure in unfamiliar subjects.

Similarly, the claims for wider and more 'relevant' choices as career interests crystallize were often thought to be more perceived than real. In fact, the impression was conveyed that undergraduates have reduced choice in their latter years and, moreover, that when selecting their course units, career considerations may not be an important factor to them. In addition to the obvious difficulty of making efficient use of limited resources, other reasons for the lack of careers relevance in course choices included: the tendency of students to remain with subjects where they feel they can cope ("where getting a degree is separated in the student's mind from getting a job"), entering new disciplinary fields in the latter years is almost impossible where subjects require prerequisites and course patterns; students develop 'identities' with areas of study; some departments 'recruit' students to their own courses, with little regard for the students' long-term career interests.

In describing the policies through which their college may assist students' career development, members of staff attached great weight to the newly established provision of college careers advisory services (CAS). Almost without exception, every interviewee agreed in principle with the need for such services. Several staff expressed a desire to see their college offer "as good a careers service as is commonly found in most universities". However, in practice, opinions clearly differed when confronted by such questions as, what financial and human resources should be allocated to careers advisers? who should staff the service? how should it relate to the administrative, counselling and curricula policies within the college? and what priorities should it give to its various functions and operations?

All the five CCRG institutions offering a diversified degree had taken steps to provide some form of a 'careers service' - at a bare minimum this may be described as a 'careers room with appropriate information and a member of staff with at least a quarter of their time allocated to careers'. The remaining college, although possessing no formal 'careers service', made use of a nearby local authority careers service; held a year group careers talk from the Principal, administered first appointments information, compiled statistics from the Deputy Principal's office, and made available a member of the academic and counselling staff, with a strong personal interest, to counsel students seeking non-teaching posts.

As a general rule, the amount of resources allocated to careers services varied according to the proportions of students on non-teaching undergraduate courses. Nevertheless, there were obvious exceptional cases where institutions had relatively few resources assigned to careers. More often than not, staff at these institutions readily conceded such shortcomings and pointed to the financial and staffing difficulties in improving the allocation. Using the full-time overall student numbers reported in the '1980 Guide to the Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education', the more generously funded careers services appeared to have a ratio of around five hundred students to one full-time (or equivalent) member of the careers team (including advisers, information assistants, and secretaries). Of course, in considering such a ratio it is necessary to bear other extenuating factors in mind (e.g. economies of scale, availability of alternative forms of advice and information, ease of access due to a single-site

campus and so on).

In the five institutions offering diversified degrees, the inauguration of careers services was said to have been precipitated firstly by the new careers problems posed by students on non-teaching courses, and subsequently by the need for BEd students to contemplate and pursue alternative career outlets. Various groups of people were cited as being instrumental in pressing home the need for college CAS's. These included: validating bodies, internal academic staff, local authority careers advisers, and the students themselves.

The college careers staff placed varying degrees of emphasis on different aspects of their work, but overall this incorporated a wide range of responsibilities: organizing conventions, giving group talks, counselling individuals on choices of courses and careers, co-ordinating references, providing and maintaining information sources and vacancy bulletins, forging links with employers, administering first destination surveys, and advising on the careers relevance of new courses. In addition, the interviewees delineated common problems facing a college-based CAS. The more recurrent of these included: the difficulties imposed by limited resources; the inception of college careers services at a time of a general oversupply of graduates; the particular labour market problems of 'arts' and 'female' graduates - two categories which are highly conspicuous in the student constituency of former colleges of education; difficulties in overcoming the cloistered traditions of teacher training establishments, where the only 'outside' connection had been with schools; and the disadvantages of not being large or prestigious enough to attract the employers'

annual 'milk round' (regional careers conventions were proposed as an alternative to this).

During the interviews with staff, there emerged a number of issues concerning the work of a college-based CAS, which, although unforeseen and unsolicited by the researcher, were clearly significant to the members of staff involved. These issues are noted below:

1. At what stage should BEd students be encouraged to consider preparing themselves for careers other than teaching? Leaving it until the third year was considered by some staff to be irresponsible of the college and unhelpful to the student. Conversely, other staff argued that to offer such advice too early could undermine a student's morale and motivation to complete the BEd course.

2. To what extent is it desirable for college careers advisers to participate actively in some normal teaching duties and curricula decision making? This question touched upon a related issue of whether or not careers advisers or counsellors should be internal or external appointments. Proponents for the former described the benefits to be gained from having first-hand experience in the academic and organizational operations of the college. Under these circumstances, it was felt that careers staff would enjoy more co-operative relationships with other staff and students. Similarly, they would more easily achieve a legitimate influence on academic planning and policy formation. On the other hand, it was maintained by others that specialist knowledge in the careers field could be obtained

more swiftly by importing experts from outside the college. Furthermore, it was contended that students are more likely to seek counselling assistance from a 'neutral' person who was not closely involved in the day-to-day commitments and business of college life.

3. In their relations with students, should college CAS's adopt a passive non-directive counselling role or an active interventionist one? Supporting the former of these positions, it was argued that CAS's should accentuate the 'voluntary' approach of students ("students should come along as and when they feel the need"). Careers personnel should provide a counselling client-centred service, rather than an advisory one. In marked contrast, other staff preferred an interventionist approach. This approach was based on the premise that left to themselves, many students were understandably apathetic, unrealistic and vague about employment opportunities. As a result, there was a danger that they would postpone career decisions and consequently find themselves in frustrating circumstances after graduation. To pre-empt such difficulties, it was advocated that staff should exercise a 'professional responsibility' and impart to the students an 'intense awareness' of the realities of the employment scene. Such an approach would recognize the dangers of 'doing too much for the students', but it would neither flinch at advising students nor at directing them to prospective employers.

4. To what extent can and should the various sources of advice and counselling within a college be so co-ordinated as to reduce the chances of creating conflicting pressures upon a student? All the careers staff recognized that other sources within the college conveyed

advice or influences to students which may directly or indirectly impinge on their careers thinking and prospects. In many cases, this diversity of sources was considered to be constructive, but most careers staff were aware of instances where it may have aggravated the career dilemmas of some students. Examples of alternative sources included: the variously labelled counsellors with a personal, pastoral or welfare brief (e.g. Personal Tutors, Studies Advisers); some academic departments made a conscious effort to provide appropriate careers advice and information; the 'internal recruitment and preservation' practices of courses and departments could have important unintended consequences for students' career orientations; the 'hidden curriculum' of certain disciplines transmit an anti-commercial or anti-capitalist system ethos which may have negative influences on a student's attitude to particular employment areas; similarly, the 'liberal-academic' value orientations may have an indirect and negative influence on students' attitudes to industry and commerce.

To conclude this section on college CAS's, staff were of the general opinion that these services, although often still at an embryonic stage, were beginning to make a positive contribution to students' career development and prospects. Despite this, virtually no one thought that the CAS's in themselves could be a distinguishing feature for the colleges. Several staff still thought that 'something extra' to compensate for the market weaknesses of college graduates was an essential requirement. In fact, some members of staff took the view that the introduction of CAS's may have fostered complacency: "now we have set up a careers service, nothing else needs to be done to prepare students for work and employment". Opposing such complacency, other

lecturers believed that in order to contribute effectively to career development and to provide positively distinctive qualities for their institutions, colleges should take a special and innovatory interest in the sphere of careers education.

The term 'careers education' means many different things to different people. Here it is used in a broad sense to conflate a wide range of curricula proposals aimed at assisting career development through incremental educative experiences, rather than the one-off sessions normally provided by a CAS. These proposals were at various stages of development: two or three were being implemented, others were being discussed by academic committees, and several were little more than ideas tentatively floated by individual interviewees. The main features included:

1. Courses aimed at improving job-hunting and application techniques (e.g. self-presentation skills, styles of application letters etc.).

2. Broader courses which would attempt to increase students' knowledge of employment opportunities and extend perceptions of their own personalities, abilities and interests in relation to available careers. Speculation also dwelt upon a special careers-related 'consciousness raising' course for women.

3. Short intense courses which would complement students' main courses by extending their range of knowledge and basic skills frequently required by employers, (e.g. courses designed to extend numeracy skills for students of non-mathematically based disciplines, introductory

computing courses, courses focusing on communication skills relevant to employment organizations etc.). To overcome students' reticence for courses perceived to entail increased risk of failure, it was often thought that these courses should be non-assessed.

4. Work and careers-related courses which would be assessed and offered as part of a degree programme. These courses would probably have a broad discipline base and would focus on the world of work and the transitional routes leading into it.

5. The strengthening of the careers component in 'personal tutor' systems. According to one suggestion, throughout and beyond the college life of the student, a 'personal tutor' should take a much more active role in overseeing and fostering the learning required for adequate career development and progress. This proposal is based on the belief that careers education will be more effective in a direct one-to-one relationship over an extended period of time.

6. Off-campus work experience proposals were discussed at most colleges, but only one institution had ventured to implement such a scheme. Some lecturers viewed work experience placements as an opportunity for applying the skills and knowledge acquired in particular courses. Maintaining that it was unnecessary to seek direct links between subject areas and placements, others took the view that it was more important for all students to be offered a genuine opportunity to explore developing career interests and to gain knowledge and insights into the daily operations of an employing organization. One member of staff described such objectives as:

Basically, it's knowledge of the structure and function of the system in which they operate ... and insights into whether or not that kind of job or work is something that suits their personality.

It was argued that many employers, particularly those convinced of the merits of experiential learning, would give careful consideration to those candidates who could use such practical experiences to complement their academic achievements. Likewise, careers education proposals were often supported on the grounds that by developing this area as a speciality within the provision of higher education, colleges could offer their students an opportunity to acquire additional and perhaps special, marketable qualities. This assumes that similar provisions are not yet available elsewhere in the higher education sector. Some support for this assumption is found in Watts (1977), but this paper also indicates that a number of universities and polytechnics had initiated advances in this aspect of the curriculum.

Many staff spoke favourably of these and similar proposals, but the practical problems involved in implementing them were thought to be considerable. Such obstacles as the limited financial resources for staffing the schemes, the difficulties associated with gaining validation, and the shortage of time within the present curricula, were frequently mentioned. (Use of the summer vacation was occasionally suggested as a solution to the lack of time problem, but this in turn would pose new difficulties and limitations). Doubts were expressed about students' interest and motivation in careers education courses. Would the provision of careers education influence the rate of student

applications? Would students attend and participate in non-assessed careers-related courses?

Before concluding, it is worth noting that staff offered two other ways in which the colleges may assist students' employment prospects, although in general, they were not alluded to as regularly as other topics cited above.

A few staff at different institutions believed that their colleges could improve their system of providing references for graduates, particularly those with non-teaching degrees. The reference forms, their administrative procedures and staff perceptions of the most appropriate skills and attributes, had been based on a tradition of relevance to the teaching profession. In the light of changing circumstances, a system was required which recognized the skills and qualities of a broader occupational base, and which allowed the compilation of references to be less general and more responsive to the detailed requirements of the particular posts applied for. Other staff, however, expressed reservations about the extent to which employers made use of the references they received.

It was argued that the growth of appropriate work-related attitudes and social skills (e.g. personal autonomy and responsibility) could be nurtured through the teaching methods employed by staff and through the extra-curricula activities of the college campus. According to this view, it was envisaged that personality attributes, such as independence and self-confidence, should be encouraged not only through the discrete elements of a student's line of study, but also

through the overall ethos and total experience created by the institution. Such qualities would strengthen the position of college graduates on the labour market by making full use of what was claimed to be some of the distinguishing features of a college campus (small size, scope for personal involvement and so on).

Many objections were levelled against this argument. They included ethical objections to 'personality moulding', the poverty of educational knowledge relating to personality development, the uncertainty over the nature of employers' requirements in the affective domain, and the likelihood of strong staff resistance to any attempts to co-ordinate teaching methods. In addition, some staff also observed that it was difficult to see how the traditionally paternalistic and protective qualities of a college campus could be reconciled with claims of their unique suitability for developing autonomy - particularly in view of the 'timid' personality traits, deemed by many interviewees to be characteristic of the typical college student intake. (It should be stressed that the research did not attempt to examine the empirical validity of staff perceptions of students' personalities and throughout the thesis, references to such traits are based solely on their purported existence.)

Some staff conceded the validity of this latter criticism, but argued that if a conscious and concerted effort was mounted, the colleges could transform these apparently negative features into positive and distinctive advantages. The following quotation illustrates the tenor of this argument:

> [The College should] ... capitalize on our smallness by devising methods of putting pressure on students within this reasonably safe context (i.e. the college environment). So you say, it's small and safe, but that is not an excuse for cosseting and protecting - it is actually a marvellous opportunity of having a small setting in which you can apply pressures as a way of tempering the students to meet them in the real world. Unless you get into the business of putting pressure on students - to meet deadlines, to speak in groups, to defend their opinion, to go out and make contacts in their own right, - unless you do that, then I think the criticism will stick that we are an institution that protects people and doesn't prepare them for the real world.

However, it should be emphasized that the majority of staff neither voiced nor supported proposals for an overall co-ordinated attempt at developing students' social skills and personality attributes.

Summary

To conclude, the interview material revealed that very few staff imbued the college curricula with the aims of advancing a positive response to economic needs and development. In keeping with values enshrined in liberal education ideologies, college academics were more likely to perceive higher education in terms of its returns and benefits to private individuals. In respect to how far these private benefits should be focused on employment currency, staff could be placed on a dichotomous continuum depending on the extent to which they felt colleges should be answerable for the subsequent careers of their graduates. At one end of the spectrum, many staff held that colleges need only accept a minimum of responsibility for graduates' careers and that intellectual and personal growth were far more

important than concerns over employability (e.g. the 'anti-marketeers'); at the opposite polarity, some staff, albeit a minority, strongly asserted that colleges had a moral duty to allocate sufficient resources and curricula to the strengthening of their graduates' employability (e.g. the proponents of careers education schemes).

In order to examine the validity of such arguments, and possibly the likely efficacy of particular careers-orientated proposals, we need to assess the extent and nature of employment-related benefits acquired through studying at a college of higher education. This is attempted by a detailed analysis of the initial careers of the earliest substantial group of college graduates with diversified degrees: in the first place, through an analysis of graduates' first destinations (Chapter Four); and then subsequently, through an interpretation of the results of the early careers survey (Chapters Five and Six).

CHAPTER FOUR

FIRST DESTINATIONS OF THE THIRD KIND

Introduction

In an attempt to study the early careers of college graduates, the bulk of the thesis is based on information derived from the questionnaire, 'Beyond Graduation'. Covering graduates' experiences and expectations during their two and a half years since leaving college, this questionnaire was administered to 1979 graduates from sixteen colleges of higher education. However, for three main reasons it was considered that a preliminary and complementary analysis of the first destinations of a wider cohort of 1979 graduates would also be worth undertaking.

Firstly, subsequent questionnaire responses can only be fully understood when seen against the background of the overall pattern of first destination trends for a larger number of college graduates in a particular year group. Secondly, as initial steps towards exploring the questions posed in the opening chapter, the first destinations statistics in their own right are a valuable source of information. Consequently, this chapter concentrates on the first destinations of the 1979 graduates, in order that any emerging issues may be extended and elaborated in the subsequent analysis of the questonnaire results.

Thirdly, as argued in Chapter One, in order to reduce the risks of viewing college graduates with myopic vision, there is clearly a need to locate these graduates in their more general context. Accordingly, whereas a wider context is sought in Chapter Five by comparing the questionnaire responses of former college of education graduates with those of proto-polytechnic and combination college graduates, since the questionnaire was not administered to university and polytechnic graduates, a comparative context is attempted in the present chapter by contrasting the first destinations performance of graduates from all three sectors of higher education.

Chapter One included a review of the recent trends in the labour market for graduates, especially liberal arts graduates. By way of emphasizing the case for appreciating the general difficulties facing graduates, a cursory reiteration of the main conclusions arising from the literature review seems appropriate.

In the main, it was noted that the colleges produced their first appreciable output of diversified degree graduates in a period of economic recession and at a time when the more enduring processes of certificate inflation and filtering down were reaching crisis proportions (Dore 1978). As a result of the highest ever output of first degree graduates coinciding with a declining number of suitable vacancies, in 1979, competition for employment was scare and graduate unemployment was comparatively high. In addition to these problems, the colleges inherited a number of intrinsic qualities, including student constituency biases towards female and liberal arts graduates, lower 'A' level grade applicants, traditionally inferior institutional

status, and only elementary careers services, all of which combined to weakened the position of college graduates, already facing a difficult external set of circumstances. In such a climate, it was thought that expectations of the career performances of college graduates needed to be realistic.

Comparing graduates' first destinations

In considering how well college graduates actually performed, it must always be remembered that, in the case of the colleges, unlike that of the universities and polytechnics, the available data only permits the making of very tentative observations about a sample of the total output. This sample was not selected randomly. In effect, each college selected themselves on the basis of their administrative capacity and willingness to participate in the first destination surveys organized by ACACHE. At present, there is no available record of the total number of 1979 college graduates. The DES provide figures for the total output of the public sector, but this figure is not disaggregated. The ACACHE survey of 1979 college graduates included 1,052 graduates with non-teaching Bachelor degrees and the preliminary data collection for the Beyond Graduation survey added a further 260 who were not covered by the ACACHE pilot survey. Consequently, since the overall output for 1979 is unlikely to extend much beyond 2,000, it may be assumed, with a reasonable degree of confidence, that the following comments are based upon at least 50 per cent of the total number.

Table 4.1 presents the first destinations of 1979 graduates from universities, polytechnics and colleges. Some important points of comparison begin to emerge. Although 1979 was the first time most colleges carried out first destination surveys, they managed to restrict the percentage of 'unknown graduates' to a level which bears favourable comparison with that of the universities and which is considerably lower than that of the polytechnics. This may be due in part to the relatively smaller and more integrated nature of the normal college campus. In view of the special and additional employment difficulties facing college graduates, it is interesting to note that the overall unemployment rate of college graduates, although higher than that of university graduates, is of the same order as that experienced by graduates from polytechnics.

However, three other noticeable differences may be less comforting for the colleges. Firstly, in comparison to university and polytechnic graduates, a smaller percentage of college graduates proceeded to research or further academic study. (Could this indicate a private demand problem, whereby difficulties in attracting able students with aspirations to higher degrees may in turn fuel an economic demand problem, by increasing employers' negative impressions of the academic standard of college graduates?) Secondly, a comparatively lower proportion of college graduates entered permanent home employment. (Does this amount to the problem of making an inferior response to economic demands, and which may, in turn, lead to a private demand problem, by worsening would-be students' perceptions of the career benefits of college degrees?)

Table 4.1 First destinations of 1979 graduates from different sectors of higher education

Percentage of first degree graduates (men and women, full-time sandwich) of total known destinations<a>

	Univ's.	Poly's.	Colleges (All types)
Research or Academic Study- Home	12.0	7.0	3.4
Research or Academic Study- Overseas	0.8	0.3	0.2
First Degree Course - Home	0	0.1	1.4
Graduateship of Prof. Body	0	0.5	0.5
Teacher Training	9.9	6.2	22.2
Social Work Training	0.3	0.1	0.3
Law Society Examinations	2.3	4.4	2.9
Other Training	5.2	2.6	5.0
Overseas Grads. Returning Home	4.6	6.0	2.5
Already in Employment	1.4	1.4	4.3
Not Available for Employment	2.5	1.8	1.3
Permanent Employment- Home	46.8	52.2	36.3
Temporary Employment- Home	5.7	8.3	8.5
Permanent Employment- Overseas	1.4	1.0	2.5
Temporary Employment- Overseas	1.8	0.9	0.8
Believed unemployed on Dec.31st	5.4	8.0	7.9
TOTAL KNOWN (100%)	52,441	12,436	924
Unemployed<b>	11.1	16.3	16.5
% Unknown of Total Grads.	10.5	22.2	12.2

NOTES

<a> Includes all U.K. universities, polytechnics in England and Wales, and the 18 colleges and institutes of H.E. in the ACACHE pilot survey, excluding education and medicine graduates.

<b> 'believed unemployed on 31 Dec.' plus 'temporary home employment'.

SOURCE: First Destination Statistics and ACACHE Pilot Survey 1979

Thirdly, a significantly greater share of college graduates took up teacher training as their first destination - double the rate of university graduates, and treble the rate of polytechnic graduates. (Does this reflect an economic demand problem of overproducing teacher-orientated graduates and a private demand problem of being unable to attract and motivate students with diversified career aspirations?)

As Tables 4.1 and 4.2 clearly indicate, this latter problem is particularly evident in those colleges which diversified from a teacher training base. In these colleges, almost one in three graduates entered teacher training courses, compared to one in ten graduates from universities and colleges which were not former teacher education colleges. The proportion proceeding to PGCE courses from colleges formed by an amalgamation of teacher education and non-teacher education traditions was approximately one in four. Whether or not this comparatively high proportion of graduates entering teacher training courses from former colleges of education is problematic, largely depends on the extent to which the colleges see themselves as offering diversified courses merely as alternative paths into teaching, or as genuine preparations for a wider range of career outlets. The determination with which the colleges implement their answers to this question seems likely to be the single most important influence on the first destinations of their future graduates.

Table 4.2 First destinations of 1979 graduates from different types of colleges of higher education (Breakdown of 'Colleges (All types)' in Table 4.1)<a>

Percentage of first degree graduates (men and women, full-time and sandwich) of total known destinations<b>

	Former Teacher Education Colleges	Proto-polytechnics	Combination Colleges
Research/Academic Study - Home	1.8	5.5	2.8
Research/Academic Study - Overseas	0	0.6	0
First Degree Course - Home	3.1	0	0
Graduateship of Prof. Body	0.2	1.2	0
Teacher Training	31.8	9.0	24.8
Social Work Training	0.5	0.3	0
Law Society Examinations	0.2	7.5	0
Other Training	6.2	3.2	5.5
Overseas Grads. Returning Home	0	5.2	3.4
Already in Employment	0	11.6	0
Not Available for Employment	0.9	1.7	1.4
Permanent Employment - Home	38.5	33.9	35.2
Temporary Employment - Home	7.6	7.5	13.8
Permanent Employment - Overseas	0.2	6.1	0.7
Temporary Employment - Overseas	0.7	1.2	0
Believed unemployed on Dec. 31st	8.5	5.2	12.4
TOTAL KNOWN (100%)	434	345	145
Unemployed<b>	16.1	12.8	26.2
% Unknown of Total Grads.	5.9	14.2	23.3

NOTES

<a> Includes all U.K. universities, polytechnics in England and Wales, and the 18 colleges and institutes of H.E. in the ACACHE pilot survey, excluding education and medicine graduates.

<b> 'believed unemployed on 31 Dec.' plus 'temporary home employment'

SOURCE: ACACHE Pilot Survey 1979

The breakdown in Table 4.2 also reveals that, compared with the other two types of college, a greater share of graduates from the proto-polytechnics entered academic research, Law Society examinations and overall employment categories ('Already in Employment' plus 'Permanent Home' and 'Overseas' employment). The high proportions of 'unemployed' and 'unknown's' from combination colleges appear to be related to their larger share of Fine Arts and Graphics graduates. Such variations demonstrate the need to distinguish between findings relating to the college sector as a whole and findings relating to particular types of colleges. It is considered here that the latter rather than the former provides a more appropriate comparative context for individual colleges seeking to evaluate the first destination trends achieved by their own graduates.

When compared with university and polytechnic graduates, a much smaller proportion of college graduates (all types) who obtained permanent home employment, entered industry (see Table 4.3). Correspondingly, a larger proportion of college graduates found employment in the public service sector, especially in the 'Local Government and Hospital Service' category. Insufficient numbers prevent a breakdown of employer categories by the different types of colleges; but one feature is salient: relative to other types of college, the former teacher education colleges had particularly low numbers entering industry, and high numbers entering public service. Again, in comparison to the universities and polytechnics, the colleges (all types) had a larger share of their graduates finding employment in the 'All Others' category (especially in 'Publishers, Cultural

Entertainment' and 'Others'), and slightly more in commerce where the sub-category 'Other Commerce' is particularly high. This relatively high concentration in the miscellaneous categories suggests that a significant proportion of college graduates appears to be entering employment areas which do not have a tradition of graduate entry. Whether or not this amounts to 'filtering down' depends on the type and level of work performed in these areas.

Table 4.3 Employer categories of 1979 graduates from different sectors of higher education

Percentage of total entrants to 'permanent home employment' in various employer categories.<a>

	Universities	Polytechnics	Colleges
Public Service	15.7	20.1	26.3
Education	4.4	3.5	6.9
Industry	42.4	44.6	17.3
Commerce	26.1	23.2	29.6
All Others	11.4	8.6	19.1
TOTALS (100%)	24,542	6,396	335

NOTES

<a> Includes all U.K. universities, polytechnics in England and Wales and the 18 colleges and institutes of higher education which participated in the ACACHE pilot survey - excluding education and medicine graduates.

SOURCE: First Destination Statistics and ACACHE Pilot Survey 1979

Table 4.4 displays the proportions entering different type of work categories as a percentage of the totals who found permanent home employment. It should be emphasized that these categories cannot, in themselves, substantiate the existence of 'filtering down', but they can provide a rough indication of its likelihood. College graduates, particularly graduates from former teacher education colleges, are

noticeably under-represented in such type of work categories as 'Scientific RD&D', 'Environmental Planning', 'Production Operation and Maintenance', and 'Financial Work'.

Table 4.4 Type of work categories for 1979 graduates from different sectors of higher education<a>

Percentage of total entrants to permanent home employment in various type of work categories.

	Colleges		Polytechnics		Universities
General Traineeships	7.5	17.9	4.0	8.5	9.1
General Management & Admin.	10.4		4.5		
Scientific Res., Design & Dev.	0.9		10.4		15.3
Environmental Planning	1.2		15.5		6.1
Scientific Analysis	1.8		3.5		4.1
Production Operation and Man.	1.2		10.7		7.4
Buying, Marketing, Selling	18.2		8.3		8.4
Services to Management	6.3		7.2		9.7
Financial Work	9.0		11.8		18.2
Legal Work	0.9		0.6		3.9
Information, Advisory & Non-scientific Research	2.7	7.5	1.5	4.7	3.3
Library, Museum, & Archive work	4.8		3.2		
Personnel	0.9	8.4	1.4	5.9	7.6
Health and Social Welfare	7.5		4.4		
Teaching, Lecturing	4.5		1.0		1.7
Creative and Entertainment	10.7	21.8	8.4	11.8	5.2
Secretarial and Clerical	7.8		1.9		
Others	3.3		1.5		
TOTALS (100%)	335		6,396		24,542

NOTES

<a> Includes all U.K. universities, polytechnics in England and Wales and the 18 colleges and institutes of HE which participated in the ACACHE pilot survey - excluding education and medicine graduates.

SOURCE: First Destination Statistics and ACACHE Pilot Survey 1979.

In contrast, one interpretation which might be drawn from the Table is that college graduates are highly represented, relative to university and polytechnic graduates, in the following kinds of work:

1. Buying, Marketing, Selling;
2. Secretarial, Clerical and Non-Specialist Administration;
3. Health and Social Welfare;
4. General Traineeships (to a lesser extent)<1>.

It does seem probable that the comparatively high numbers entering these types of work could well be associated with signs of 'filtering down' the labour market by graduates from colleges. Williamson (1979b) cites clerical and social welfare work as areas indicative of 'filtering down' and many of the jobs within the category, 'Buying, Marketing, Selling' -: e.g. sales representatives or trainee managers in chain stores - could be entered in the not too distant past on the merits of 'A' levels, rather than degrees. However, recognition of the likelihood of 'filtering down' is not synonymous with the conclusion that college graduates are failing to make a positive contribution to the economy, or that very little demand exists for them. The unemployment was no higher than that experienced by polytechnic graduates, although it should be recognized that, relative to other sectors, the college unemployment figure was improved by high numbers going into teacher training, and not permanent employment. However, it is still feasible that particular kinds of employers may have specific demands for college graduates and further research may be needed to address two questions relating to this: (i) How do these particular employers explain and articulate their

recruitment of college graduates? (ii) Does higher education from a college improve the quality of work performed in the jobs associated with 'filtering down'? This latter question will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

First destinations and gender differences

Information on the whole of the 1979 sample (1,217 graduates) supports the earlier assertion that the majority of college graduates were women: the proportion of women to men in all types of colleges was three to two. However, this overall ratio conceals variations between different types of colleges which qualify the general conclusion. While former colleges of education had a ratio of two women to every man, those colleges without teacher education, the proto-polytechnics, had an equal share of male and female graduates. Combination colleges had a ratio of three women to two men.

Turning to a comparison of the first destinations entered by each sex, the review of recent trends in graduate employment suggested that a slightly higher share of female graduates would fall into the overall unemployment category than their male colleagues.

As Table 4.5 demonstrates, this turned out to be the case for university and polytechnic graduates, but not for college graduates.

Table 4.5 - Comparison of male and female first destinations

The first destinations of 1979 first degree graduates (full-time and sandwich) as a percentage of the total known for each sex<a>

	Colleges		Universities		Polytechnics	
	M	W	M	W	M	W
Res./Academic Study- Home	4.6	2.4	13.9	8.7	7.0	6.9
Res./Acad. Study- Overseas	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.4
First Degree Course - Home	1.8	1.1	0	0	0.1	0.1
Graduateship Prof. Body	0.5	0.6	0	0	0.5	0.4
Teacher Training	15.2	27.3	6.0	16.7	4.3	10.4
Social Work Training	0	0.6	0.1	0.6	0	0.3
Law Society Examinations	4.4	1.9	2.2	2.6	4.6	4.0
Other Training	2.3	6.9	3.2	8.6	1.6	4.7
Overseas Grads. Ret. Home	3.3	1.9	5.8	2.5	7.4	2.9
Already in Employment	8.2	1.5	1.7	0.8	2.0	0.1
Not Avail. for Employment	0.5	1.9	2.1	3.2	1.3	2.8
Perm. Employment - Home	36.5	36.5	50.8	39.8	54.8	44.0
Temp. Employment - Home	11.8	6.2	5.1	6.8	7.2	10.7
Perm. Employment- Overseas	1.8	3.0	1.6	1.0	1.1	0.9
Temp. Employment- Overseas	1.0	0.6	1.4	2.4	0.7	1.2
Unemployed on Dec.31st	9.8	6.6	5.3	5.5	7.0	10.1
TOTAL KNOWN (100%)	389	534	33,367	19,074	8,559	3,877
Unemployed<b>	21.6	12.7	10.4	12.3	14.2	20.9
% Unknown of Total Grads.	13.6	11.3	10.9	9.7	21.9	23.0

NOTES

<a> Includes all U.K. universities, polytechnics in England and Wales, - and the 18 colleges and institutes of H.E. in the ACACHE pilot survey, excluding education and medicine graduates.

<b> 'Believed unemployed on 31 Dec' plus 'temporary home employment'.

SOURCE: First Destinations Statistics and ACACHE Pilot Survey 1979.

A slightly higher percentage of women university graduates (12 per cent) than men university graduates (10 per cent) were unemployed; for polytechnic graduates, the difference was much larger: 21 per cent female unemployment and 14 per cent male unemployment; in contrast to 22 per cent unemployment for men college graduates (the highest rate for either sex in any of the three sectors), only 13 per cent of women college graduates were unemployed. However, this relatively low unemployment rate for women college graduates is not accounted for by a corresponding higher rate of entry into permanent home employment. Female college graduates had the lowest rate of entry into permanent home employment of either sex in all three sectors (37 per cent) - lower than male college graduates, if the unusually large difference in the 'already in employment' category is given due consideration.

The comparatively low proportion of women college graduates in employment and unemployment is better explained by their high proportions in teacher training, which they entered at a rate almost twice that of their male colleagues and considerably higher than that of female graduates from other sectors of higher education. Consequently, it would seem that whereas a sizeable number of men college graduates appeared to accept temporary work or unemployment rather than enter teacher training, a significant group of women college graduates opted for teacher training in preference to temporary work or unemployment. This observation seems to be particularly true of students in former colleges of education; in the proto-polytechnics, a greater share of women than men entered teacher training, but the proportions unemployed <2> were more equally matched.

If colleges consider it desirable to check the flow into teacher training, then in addition to assisting those graduates, male and female, who have no intentions of teaching, they also need to devote more resources to influencing undergraduate attitudes to career opportunities other than teaching, especially for women. In the absence of such conscious attempts to influence career orientations, it seems probable that traditional values and practices will ensure that the diversified programmes will be perceived and implemented mainly as alternative, more flexible, routes into teaching.

The distribution of male and female college graduates among different areas of unemployment resembles the variations between different genders of university and polytechnic graduates. Table 4.6 indicates that roughly the same proportions of male and female college graduates entered Commerce and 'All Others'; a greater proportion of women found work in the Public Service and Education sectors; and a larger share of men was employed within Industry. Of the key type of work categories entered by college graduates, 'Buying, Marketing, Selling' had approximately the same proportions of each sex, as did 'Health and Social Welfare' (see Table 4.7). Not surprisingly, 'Secretarial and Clerical Work' absorbed many more women than men. 'Teaching and Lecturing' and 'Library, Museum Work etc' showed similar trends, but more men were to be found within 'Services to Management' and 'Financial Work'.

Table 4.6 Employment areas of male and female college graduates

The employer categories of 1979 male and female college graduates as a percentage of the total entering permanent home employment for each sex.

	Public Service	Education	Industry	Commerce	All Others	TOTAL (100%)
Men	21.0	1.4	26.1	31.9	19.6	142
Women	30.4	10.8	11.3	28.4	19.1	195

SOURCE: 1979 First Destinations of College Graduates (ACACHE)

Table 4.7 Type of work comparisons between male and female college graduates

The type of work categories of 1979 male and female college graduates as a percentage of the total entering permanent home employment for each sex.

	Men	Women
General Traineeships	7.9	7.3
Non-Specialist Management & Admin.	7.9	12.4
Buying, Marketing, Selling	20.0	17.1
Services to Management	11.4	2.6
Financial Work	15.0	4.7
Creative & Entertainment Work	12.9	9.3
Library, Museum etc.	0.7	7.8
Health and Social Welfare	5.7	8.8
Teaching, Lecturing	0.7	7.3
Secretarial, Clerical	2.8	11.4
All Other Categories	15.0	11.4
TOTALS (100%)	142	195

SOURCE: 1979 First Destinations of College Graduates (ACACHE)

First destinations and subject differences

The objective of seeking to discuss the implications for curricula development clearly gives rise to the need to study the associations between the early careers of graduates and the courses they studied at college. Furthermore, since the two other sectors of higher education collect and present details of first destinations for each of the main subject categories, it would certainly be informative and ultimately in their own interests, for colleges to do likewise. If, for example, comparisons could be based upon the first destination statistics for a specific discipline, instead of those for an undiscriminated total, an inferior aggregate unemployment rate could be shown to overlay a superior rate in a particular area. Expressing the example in question form: despite an inferior overall rate of unemployment, are college arts graduates less likely to be unemployed than university arts graduates? Moreover, if a significantly greater proportion of college graduates studied arts subjects than did graduates in other sectors, then the approach illustrated in this example represents, for some purposes at least, a more valid and appropriate form of comparison than composite-based ones. Therefore, for some ends, in order to avoid comparing apples with oranges, there exists a strong need for colleges to examine, and hence collect infomation on, the first destinations of their graduates in relation to the subjects they studied.

Unfortunately, attempts to implement subject-specific comparisons soon encounter intractable problems which inevitably

compromise the outcome. Basically, most of the difficulties can be traced to the comparatively low number of college graduates, especially in certain disciplines, coupled with a wide variety of permutations in combined subjects. These problems make it difficult to devise a method of subject classification which is truly appropriate to the course content of the colleges' curricula, which allows some comparison with other sectors of higher education, and which, at the same time, produces a reasonable number of graduates in each subject category. The latter problem is particularly awkward for the 1979 graduates since, in many cases, the necessary data were not available for a sufficient number of graduates to reduce the impact of 'colleges' as an intervening variable e.g. if a particular discipline area contains graduates from a very small number of colleges, are the early career patterns of these graduates attributable to the influence of 'college attended' or 'subject studied'?

Notwithstanding these unavoidable weaknesses, a method of subject classification has been adopted which permits some degree of comparison with other sectors. This method, set out in full in Appendix C, classifies college degree courses into five categories: 'Arts', 'Social Studies', 'Arts and Social Studies', 'Science' and 'Other Combinations'. Although the first two, 'Arts' and 'Social Studies', are broadly comparable with corresponding discipline areas in university and polytechnic first destination statistics, science requires greater caution because it includes Home Economics in the colleges. The remaining two categories, 'Arts and Social Studies' and 'Other Combinations', preclude all forms of cross-sector analysis.

Using information from the ACACHE pilot survey, the non-CCRG colleges participating in the Beyond Graduation project, and three of the six CCRG member institutions, it has proved possible to classify the discipline areas and first destinations of 874 of the 1,217 graduates included in this analysis (approximately 72 per cent). The results are presented in Tables 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11.

The similarities between the 'Colleges' row of Table 4.1 and the 'All Subjects' row of Table 4.9 suggest that, in first destinations terms at least, the sample of 874 graduates can be taken as broadly representative of the larger group from which it was selected. The only slight qualification may be that graduates from the proto-polytechnics are marginally over-represented.

Table 4.8 reveals that the majority of the sample (57 per cent) undertook courses, or combinations of courses, completely within the arts area. Although not shown in the Table, the corresponding percentages for 1979 university and polytechnic graduates were 23 and 21 per cent respectively. Adding to this the fact that a further 12 per cent of college graduates studied arts and social studies, and only 9 per cent graduated from the science area, the data can be taken as confirmation of the view that 1979 college graduates were predominantly arts-based. Moreover, a more pronounced concentration of arts graduates was found to exist in the former teacher education and combination colleges than in the proto-polytechnics, where a comparatively greater proportion of social studies graduates was evident.

Table 4.8 Subject areas of 1979 college graduates

	Percentage of selected sample of 1979 college graduates with degrees in each subject.<a>		
	%	N	N. of colleges with graduates in sample
Arts	56.6	495	14
Social Studies	18.6	163	3
Arts & Social Studies	12.0	105	7
Science	8.9	78	6
Others	3.9	33	5
TOTALS	100%	874	14

NOTES

<a> See Appendix C for method of grouping courses into subject areas.

SOURCE: Calculated by the author from sources identified in text.

Table 4.8 also shows the number of colleges from which the graduates in each discipline category were drawn. All fourteen colleges contributed graduates to the arts area and because an acceptable proportion of graduates from each type of college was included, this area is comparable with other sectors.

The same cannot be said of the social studies area. Almost all of the social studies graduates (159 out of 163) emerged from the two proto-polytechnics, and, although comparisons with other sectors could be drawn, the data could not be taken as representative of the college sector as a whole, nor are there sufficient number of colleges to

obviate the effects of a particular college as an intervening variable.

The three remaining discipline areas contain a greater number of colleges, and thus go further to overcome the effects of particular colleges, but, of course, these categories possess no comparable equivalents in the university and polytechnic statistics.

In turning to Table 4.9 to consider the first destinations of graduates from different discipline areas within the college sector, two important limitations on the interpretation of the results become apparent.

The 'Other Combinations' category is limited to twenty-eight graduates and the 'Social Studies' category is very idiosyncratic (i.e. the vast majority of social studies graduates studied at the two proto-polytechnics and followed courses in Law, Business Studies and Economics, which correspond directly to the proportions in Law Society Examinations, Already in Employment and Gained Permanent Home Employment). For such reasons, these categories should be treated with caution and, to avoid confusion, the 'Social Studies' category has been eliminated from the following interpretation of the Table.

Table 4.9 First destinations of 1979 college graduates in different subject areas<a>

Percentage of first degree graduates (male and female) in each subject areaa whose whereabouts were known<b>

	Arts	Soc. Studies	Arts & Soc. Studies	Science	Other Combs.	All Subjects
Res./Acad. Study Home	4.9	4.9	5.4	6.8	0	5.0
Res./Acad. Study O'seas	0.3	0	0	1.4	0	0.3
First Degree Course	0.3	0	1.1	0	0	0.3
Grad. Prof. Body	0.5	0	0	0	0	0.3
Teacher Training	23.8	2.1	27.2	24.7	39.3	20.7
Social Work Training	0	0	0	1.4	0	0.1
Law Society Exams	0.3	18.3	0	0	0	3.7
Other Training	4.9	0.7	10.9	2.7	0	4.4
O'seas Grads. Ret. Home	2.8	8.5	0	1.4	0	3.3
Already in Employment	0.3	27.5	0	0	0	5.5
Not avail. for employ.	2.8	0.7	0	1.4	0	1.8
Perm. Employment Home	33.6	26.8	38.0	47.9	53.6	35.0
Temp. Employment Home	11.3	4.9	9.8	4.1	7.1	9.0
Perm. Employment O'seas	4.4	2.8	2.2	1.4	0	3.3
Temp. Employment O'seas	0.8	0	0	1.4	0	0.6
Unemployed on Dec. 31st	9.2	2.8	5.4	5.5	0	6.8
TOTAL KNOWN (100%)	390	142	92	73	28	725
Unemployed<c>	20.5	7.7	15.2	9.6	7.1	15.7
% Unknown of Total	21.2	12.9	12.4	6.4	15.2	17.0

NOTES

<a> See Appendix C for method of subject classification and text for details of college sample

<b> The relatively low numbers involved emphasize the need for caution when drawing comparisons

<c> 'believed unemployed at 31st Dec' plus 'temporary home employment'

With respect to college graduates only, it is clear that unemployment was higher for arts graduates (20 per cent) than for those in any other discipline area<2>. Moreover, the findings are consistent with the tentative view that by augmenting an arts course with a science or mathematics based course, or even a social studies course, arts orientated graduates may reduce their chances of being unemployed. Similarly, in comparison to all other discipline areas, the 'Arts' produced the lowest proportion of graduates entering permanent home employment (34 per cent). The proportion of science graduates who found permanent employment (48 per cent) remained higher than arts graduates, even when Home Economics graduates, who were normally successful in obtaining employment, are excluded from the science category.

Taking the unemployment and permanent employment indices together, and recognizing that all the discipline areas had roughly the same proportions entering teacher training, it would appear that there was a slightly inferior demand for college arts graduates than for college graduates in other discipline areas.

Thus far, the discussion has treated college arts graduates as a uniform group. Table 4.11 disaggregates the total of college arts graduates into the numbers for each type of college, while Table 4.10 presents the same details for university, college (all types) and

polytechnic arts graduates:

A review of the first destinations of all college arts graduates (Table 4.10) in relation to those of university and polytechnic arts graduates constitutes the most promising form of cross-sector comparison so far presented for the colleges. College arts graduates achieved an entry into permanent home employment (34 per cent) which was higher than that for the universities (31 per cent), and only slightly lower than that for the polytechnics (37 per cent). College arts graduates experienced an unemployment rate (20 per cent) lower than the polytechnic rate (28 per cent), although higher than the university proportion (16 per cent). In addition, the share of arts graduates from colleges embarking on teacher training courses almost matched the proportion taking the same route from universities.

Consequently, from the colleges' standpoint, this form of comparison represents a marked improvement on the composite-based comparison presented in Table 4.1 and clearly demonstrates the potential value of classifying and collating first destination details according to the main discipline categories.

Table 4.10 First destinations of 1979 Arts graduates from different sectors of higher education

Percentage of first degree Arts<a> graduates (male and female) in each sector of higher education whose whereabouts were known<b>

	College	University (Groups 8 & 9)	Polytechnic (Languages, Arts & Music etc.)
Res./Academic Study - Home	4.9	8.0	8.4
Res./Academic Study - Overseas	0.3	1.1	0.6
First Degree Course - Home	0.3	0	0.1
Graduateship Prof. Body	0.5	0	0.3
Teacher Training	23.8	20.2	14.1
Social Work Training	0	0.4	0
Law Society Examinations	0.3	0.8	0.1
Other Training	4.9	10.6	4.1
Overseas Grads. Ret. Home	2.8	1.4	1.0
Already in Employment	0.3	1.0	0.1
Not available for employment	2.8	3.5	3.1
Perm. Employment - Home	33.6	31.4	37.1
Temp. Employment - Home	11.3	9.0	14.2
Perm. Employment - Overseas	4.4	1.7	1.5
Temp. Employment - Overseas	0.8	3.8	1.6
Unemployed on Dec. 31st	9.2	7.2	13.7
TOTAL KNOWN (100%)	390	13,297	2,777
Unemployed<c>	20.5	16.2	27.9
% Unknown of Total Graduates	21.2	12.5	29.7

NOTES

<a> See Appendix C for method of subject classification and text for details of college sample

<b> The relatively low numbers involved emphasize the need for caution when drawing comparisons

<c> 'believed unemployed at 31 Dec' plus 'temporary home employment'

Table 4.11 First destinations of 1979 Arts graduates from different types of colleges of higher education (Breakdown of 'College' column in Table 4.10)<a>

Percentage of first degree Arts<b> graduates (male and female) in each type of college whose whereabouts were known.

	Former Teacher Education Colleges	Proto-polytechnics	Combination Colleges
Res./Academic Study - Home	2.2	7.7	4.2
Res./Academic Study - Overseas	0	0.6	0
First Degree Course - Home	0.7	0	0
Graduateship Prof. Body	0	1.3	0
Teacher Training	41.3	12.2	17.7
Social Work Training	0	0	0
Law Society Examinations	0.7	0	0
Other Training	8.0	3.8	2.1
Overseas Grads. Returned Home	0	3.8	5.2
Already in Employment	0	0.6	0
Not Available for Employment	4.3	1.9	2.1
Perm. Employment Home	28.3	39.1	32.3
Temp. Employment Home	9.4	9.6	16.7
Perm. Employment Overseas	0.7	9.6	1.0
Temp. Employment Overseas	0	1.9	0
Unemployed on 31st Dec	4.3	7.7	18.8
TOTAL KNOWN (100%)	138	156	96
Unemployed<c>	13.8	17.3	35.4
% Unknown of Total Graduates	18.8	17.5	29.4

NOTES

<a> See Appendix C for method of subject classification and text for details of college sample

<b> The relatively low numbers involved emphasize the need for caution when drawing comparisons

<c> 'believed unemployed at 31 Dec' plus 'temporary home employment'

However, it must be acknowledged that, for this particular year group at least, the colleges attained this encouraging comparison because of the destinations achieved by arts graduates from proto-polytechnics, and inspite of the comparatively poor performance of arts graduates from former colleges of education. For example, whereas arts graduates from proto-polytechnics found permanent jobs at a higher rate than those from universities and polytechnics; arts graduates from colleges which diversifed from a teacher education base displayed the lowest of all proportions entering permanent home employment. Similarly, although the latter type of colleges had a slightly lower proportion of unemployed arts graduates<2>, this result was almost certainly due to the very high percentage taking up teacher training courses (41 per cent). In addition, these problems take on an increased significance when it is recalled that the former colleges of education tended to produce a particularly high preponderance of arts-based graduates.

To conclude this section, it appears that the inclusion of discipline areas into the analysis of first destinations certainly unfolds a more favourable picture for the colleges as a whole. However, a breakdown of arts graduates into different types of colleges suggests that the former teacher education colleges confronted particular problems in extending and diversifying the career prospects of arts-based graduates.

First destinations and differences in entry qualifications

A further argument maintains that any comparison of first destinations should incorporate an analysis of differences in the entry qualifications, and by inference the academic standards, achieved by graduates from the various sectors. According to this approach, variations in the output of an establishment must be studied in relation to variations in the input. Applied to college graduates, it is claimed that because the currency value of a college degree is higher than that of mediocre 'A' levels, the career opportunities of those with relatively low entry qualifications are considerably enhanced, though not to a level commensurate with university graduates, who generally attain higher entry qualifications.

At the present moment, the information required to examine this and similar arguments is not available. Practically, all that can be undertaken here is a cursory consideration of the view that the 1979 graduates of former colleges of education were generally of a lower academic standard, as indicated by their GCE 'A' levels upon entry, than graduates from universities. To this end, Tables 4.12 and 4.13 compare the 'A' levels obtained by 357 students who graduated in 1979 from four CCRG colleges with those obtained by a sample of undergraduates entering universities in the academic year 1976.

Table 4.12 GCE 'A' levels held by graduate samples from colleges and universities

	1979 college graduates		1976-1977 university undergraduate sample	
		%		%
Three 'A' levels or more	42		75	
Two 'A' levels	52		13	
Other qualifications	6		12	
TOTALS (100%)	357		7,051	

SOURCE: Statistical Supplement to the Fifteenth Report 1976-7 (UCCA)

Table 4.13 GCE 'A' level scores obtained by graduate samples<a>

	1979 college graduates		1976-1977 university undergraduate sample<b>	
		%		%
Score on 3 subjects				
15-13	2		20	
12-9	7		32	
8-3	33		23	
Score on 2 subjects				
10-8	3		2	
7-5	17		7	
4-2	32		4	
Other qualifications	6		12	
TOTALS (100%)	357		7,051	

NOTES

<a> The methods used to calculate these scores are the same as those described on p.13 of the source (i.e. A=5,B=4,C=3,D=2,E=1). However, for the university sample, subjects not acceptable for university entrance are excluded, all subjects are included for the college sample.

<b> For the university sample, if a candidate passes in more than three subjects, the 'best' three performances have been used. The college sample includes a small number of graduates with scores from four subjects, but in these cases the inclusion of a fourth subject does not alter the grouping of their score.

SOURCE: Statistical Supplement to the Fifteenth Report 1976-77 (UCCA)

Whereas 75 per cent of the university sample possessed three or more 'A' levels, only 42 per cent of the college sample did so. Similarly, 52 per cent of the university sample achieved 'A' level scores of nine points or over (scored on three subjects) in contrast to 9 per cent of the college sample. At the lower end of the spectrum, 4 per cent of the univerity sample, compared to 32 per cent of the college sample, had scores between four and two points (scored on two subjects).

Furthermore, it should be stressed that scores for 'A' level subjects not usually accepted for university entrance were excluded from the university sample, but included in the college sample. Consequently, these findings tend to support the first premise in the argument presented above, namely, so far as 1979 graduates were concerned, the former colleges of education attracted a body of students with lower academic qualifications than those entering universities.

The analysis of the argument can be taken one step further by examining the associated claim that a college degree can override the limitations associated with mediocre 'A' levels, and, in terms of graduate employability, can place the weaker 'A' level student on a par with the more highly qualified entrant. For the purpose of exploring this proposition, the sample of 357 college graduates have been divided into two groups - those with an average or below average mean 'A' level score (based on a total score for all subject grades achieved) and those with an above average 'A' level score.

As Table 4.14 illustrates, the below average group (65 per cent) had scores of five or below, the above average group (35 per cent) had scores of six or above. Crosstabulation analyses revealed few significant associations between these 'A' level groups and such variables as classification of degree, primary destinations, type of employer and type of work. At this stage in the analysis, it would seem, for instance, that belonging to either of the groups did not influence graduates' chances of obtaining a particular class of degree, finding permanent employment or entering teacher training. The only slight qualification to this tentative conclusion is that a greater proportion of the above average group found secretarial and clerical work, predominantly in the public sector, while a greater share of the lower group was to be found in 'Buying, Marketing, Selling' and 'Other Commerce' categories.

However, as a general tendency, the lower group did not appear to be achieving inferior classifications or placements and this lends support to the view that, relative to the more highly qualified college entrants, colleges can enhance the career prospects of students of lower academic standards. This finding, and the previous one concerning the generally lower academic qualifications of college students compared to university students, need to be borne in mind when assessing the implications of the preceding material.

Table 4.14 Total 'A' level scores for sample of college graduates<a>

Score	Frequency	
0	17	
1	3	
2	46	Average or below
3	55	average group
4	48	65 per cent
5	64	
6	49	
7	22	
8	17	
9	12	
10	7	Above average group
11	4	35 percent
12	6	
13	4	
14	2	
16	1	
TOTAL	357	

Mode=5; Mean=4.9; Median=4.6

NOTES

<a> For method of calculation of score see note <a> in Table 4.13.
In this Table, the total score has been arrived at by summing the scores for all the 'A' levels obtained by each graduate.

However, overreliance on the differential entry-standards argument - either as a line of defence or as a positive admissions policy which deliberately discriminates in favour of those with low or no 'A' levels (see Gibbs and Cree 1982) - entails some considerable risks for the colleges. For instance, questions need to be asked about the effects a low level intake policy could have upon employers' perceptions of the merit of a college degree. It should be recalled that Bacon et al (1979) discovered that employers' main reason for perceiving university qualifications to be of a higher value than

polytechnic ones was the lower intake standards operating in the polytechnics. Given the existence of similar standards in colleges, it seems highly probable that colleges will find themselves in the same, if not inferior, 'down market' self-perpetuating cycle which confronts the polytechnics.

Additionally, in order to implement an admissions policy based on the recruitment of lowly qualified entrants, it would appear necessary for the colleges to substantiate two important claims: firstly, that the careers-currency value of a college degree is indeed higher than that of mediocre 'A' levels - a point which cannot be presumed especially in view of the likelihood of some filtering down by college graduates; and secondly, that students of a comparable academic standard do not attain greater enhancement of career opportunities by attending a university - a point which is of special importance in view of the demographic trends which may well lead to a far greater proportion of the lowly qualified being offered places at universities.

Finally, if it is argued that, relative to their more highly qualified fellow-students, the lowly qualified college students can obviate the disadvantages of poor 'A' level results, then the converse of this argument would also have to be accepted, namely that the more highly qualified tend to forego the advantages of superior 'A' level results. If colleges operate according to low intake standards, then, given the superior university first destinations indices discussed earlier, it would appear that the more highly qualified 'A' level students would generally derive greater career benefits by attending a university.

Summary

On the basis of the review of the literature on the graduate labour market presented in Chapter One, it has been argued that the entry of college graduates into the labour market for the highly qualified needs to be understood in the context and trends of the graduate employment market as a whole. In recent years, this market has become extremely competitive and certain parts of the highly qualified pool have faced particular problems - namely, liberal arts graduates, female graduates and graduates from low status institutions. Unfortunately for the colleges, there are clear indications that the output from former colleges of education largely consists of these categories of less employable graduates.

From a comparison of 1979 composite outputs from different sectors of higher education, it was noted that the polytechnics displayed unemployment rates similar to those of the former colleges of education, although the latter had significantly smaller percentages entering permanent occupations and further academic study. In contrast, a higher proportion of graduates from former colleges of education entered PGCE training - a route which a large and disproportionate number of women college graduates seem to favour. Very few graduates from this type of college found employment in industry and, relative to graduates from other sectors, they were highly represented in areas lacking a tradition of graduate entry - perhaps suggesting a greater propensity for filtering down to lower status

occupations. Restricting the comparison to graduates in the arts, improved the position for the college sector as whole, but did little to ameliorate the overall picture of the relatively poor performance of graduates from former colleges of education.

First destination statistics provide a useful basis for gaining a preliminary impression of graduates' early career trends, particularly in so far as they afford the opportunity for drawing comparisons between different sectors of higher education. However, they suffer from a number of important limitations. For example, they are restricted to information collected up to a maximum of six months after graduation; clearly, in order to assess more enduring career benefits, details over a longer period of time are essential. Information on the nature of employment entered is, of necessity, very rudimentary and no analyses of such variables as length of contracts, salaries, and range of occupations applied for, are possible. Moreover, the data obtained through first destination surveys are limited to external behavioural indices, with no attempts being made to collect subjective and phenomenological accounts of early careers and employment experience. It was to overcome such deficiences as these that the survey 'Beyond Graduation' was designed and implemented.

NOTES

<1> Creative and Entertainment could have been included, but this figure is only slightly higher than the percentage for polytechnics, and the vast majority of college graduates in this category are from

the combination colleges with a tradition in the Fine and Graphic Arts.

<2> i.e. 'temporary home employment' plus 'believed to be unemployed on December 31st' of the graduating year.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EARLY CAREERS OF DIVERSIFIED DEGREE GRADUATES

Introduction

Using the survey responses of the sample described in Chapter Two, this chapter sets out to portray the careers-related experiences and perceptions of 1979 college graduates who obtained first degrees other than the BEd. Reflecting the two different types of data to emerge from the questionnaire, the chapter is organized into two main parts. Whereas the first part concentrates largely on external behavioural indices of career patterns and employment trends, the second focuses more attention on 'subjective' and attitudinal aspects of graduates' careers. This structure, however, is not intended to be preclusive, since the former contains subjective accounts of employment areas and the latter examines the interrelations between levels of

satisfaction and objective circumstances. In broad terms, the first addresses the question, 'Into what circumstances, and areas of employment, have college graduates progressed?' while the second considers, 'To what extent are college graduates satisfied with these circumstances?'

For reasons offered in the previous chapter, the interpretations presented here are predominantly concerned with graduates from colleges which have diversified solely from a teacher training base. Hence, for the sake of brevity, throughout this chapter, the term 'college' is reserved for the former colleges of education. Specific references will be used to denote the two other types of colleges, combination colleges and proto-polytechnics.

PART ONE

By way of tracing the respondents' overall progression since leaving college, Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 display details of the circumstances entered by respondents from each of the three types of college. Showing the proportions of respondents in each of the main careers classifications at three different points in time: December 31st, 1979, 1980 and 1981, these tables provide a broad view of the respondents' changing circumstances since leaving college.

Table 5.1 Primary classification details of 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education at different stages in their early careers<a>

	SOURCE OF INFORMATION:			
	College Careers Adviser	'Beyond Graduation' Questionnaire		
	31/12/79	31/12/79	31/12/80	31/12/81
	%	%	%	%
Research/Academic Study	1	0.5	1	1
Teacher Training	30	36	5	3
Social Work Training	0	0	0.5	0.5
Law Society Exams	0.5	0.5	0.5	0
Other Training	7	7	2	3
Not Avail. for Employment	2	1	2	4
Permanent Home Employment	31	33	68	73
Temporary Home Employment	2	9	9	3
Temp. Overseas Employment	0	2	2	1
Unemployed	3	11	10	11
Unknown	23.5	0	0.5	0.5
TOTALS (100%)	247	247	247	247

NOTES

<a> Unless stated to the contrary, all tables in Chapters Five and Six display results as percentages of the survey respondents.

Table 5.2 Primary classification details of 1979 non-BEd respondents from combination colleges at different stages in their early careers

	SOURCES OF INFORMATION:			
	College Careers Adviser	'Beyond Graduation' Questionnaire		
	31/12/79	31/12/79	31/12/80	31/12/81
	%	%	%	%
Research/Academic Study	0	0	0	3
Teacher Training	22	17	5	2
Law Society Exams	0	0	0	3
Other Training	2	5	0	0
Not Avail. for Employment	5	7	7	7
Permanent Home Employment	32	42	49	51
Temporary Home Employment	7	12	12	7
Unemployed	10	17	27	27
Unknown	22	0	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	41	41	41	41

Table 5.3 Primary classification details of 1979 non-BEd respondents from proto-polytechnics at different stages in their early careers

	SOURCES OF INFORMATION:			
	College Careers Adviser	'Beyond Graduation' Questionnaire		
	31/12/79	31/12/79	31/12/80	31/12/81
	%	%	%	%
Research/Academic Study	3	0	0	5
Teacher Training	13	13	3	0
Law Society Exams	0	5	0	0
Other Training	13	10	5	5
Overseas Students Ret Home	0	3	3	3
Permanent Home Employment	43	54	79	77
Temporary Home Employment	3	5	5	3
Unemployed	5	10	5	7
Unknown	20	0	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	39	39	39	39

In addition, column 1 in each of the three tables displays the first destination categories of the respondents, as recorded by their careers advisers on December 31st, 1979. The remaining columns are based on information supplied through the responses to the 'Beyond Graduation' questionnaire. By way of commencing a description of the respondents' career patterns, each of the main classifications listed in Table 5.1. may be considered in turn.

Studying for higher degrees

Some college prospectuses cite research and further academic study as a potential career outlet for graduates of diversified degree programmes. The evidence of the survey suggests that this claim may reflect a 'stars syndrome', whereby the advanced academic achievements of exceptional graduates ("one of our former students is doing research for a PhD. in 19th Century Foreign Policy") gains greater saliency in the minds of college staff than the very low statistical probability of college graduates entering this area.

Table 5.1 indicates that a negligible number of college respondents advanced their academic studies to higher degree level. No more than 1 per cent of the respondents in any one of the three years since graduating had undertaken full-time further academic study. Put another way, during the thirty months since leaving college, only four of the 247 respondents had, at any time, followed a course leading to a

higher degree. All four pursued their courses at institutions other than those from which they had graduated. Although some initially felt their higher degree courses would entail employment benefits; there were no immediate signs of increased employability, and indeed, their expectations on completing their courses were often quite low:

> (Q.20ii) MSc.- useful for certain jobs but my course was very specific and would only open doors into a limited number of jobs, which were very rare in appearing.
>
> (Q.21) MA. - I expect to join the dole queue.
>
> (Q.11) M.Litt.- I was offered chance to do this while applying for a different research post, while applying for art teaching posts, and considered the opportunity worth taking. I intend, still, to do some art teaching in a secondary school, when I have finished my research.

However, it should be added that a longer time scale is almost certainly required to assess the impact of taking a higher degree. On a comparative note, the first destination details shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate the higher proportions entering further academic study from universities, polytechnics and the colleges of higher education referred to as the 'proto-polytechnics'. Tables 5.2 and 5.3, however, show that few 'Beyond Graduation' respondents from either the combination colleges or proto-polytechnics embarked on further academic study.

Not available for employment

Although small at the end of the graduating year, the proportion of college respondents not available for full-time employment rose slightly, but steadily, during the following years and

amounted to 4 per cent (nine out of 247) by the end of 1981 (Table 5.1). Only two respondents had been unavailable for the entire thirty months since leaving college. One had started a family immediately after graduation, the other, although virtually unemployed for long periods, saw herself as a self-employed potter and casual arts worker. Rather than applying for a single full-time job, she preferred "to have several quite different work styles". In addition to these two respondents, of the nine who were unavailable for employment at the end of 1981, five had given up their jobs, none of which were teaching posts, in order to concentrate on motherhood and domestic work.

As Tables 5.2 and 5.3 indicate, the percentage of respondents not available for employment was only slightly higher for the combination colleges, but was non-existent for the proto-polytechnics. The marginally higher proportions for the combination colleges may reflect a greater share of fine arts graduates, several of whom attempted to sustain a self-employed 'artist' identity. One such graduate made the following comment:

> (Q.21) I went to art college. I now have a part-time typing/secretarial job in order to earn money, but this has nothing to do with my 'career'. I consider myself an artist - a sort of unpaid research worker, working for him/herself.

Temporary employment

9 per cent of college respondents were temporarily employed at the end of the graduating year (Table 5.1). This proportion remained stable during 1980 and then fell to 4 per cent by the end of 1981. It

would, however, be incorrect to interpret this trend as the experience of a single group of graduates who had continuous difficulties escaping the temporary employment category. Closer examination of the percentages reveals considerable differences in the constituencies of each of the three year end batches of temporary workers.

Of the twenty-three who were in temporary employment at the end of the graduating year, the majority, seventeen, occupied posts which were in effect permanent, but which the respondents, at least at the time of completing the questionnaire, chose to perceive as temporary. The remaining six were in posts which were fixed to limited periods, irrespective of how they were perceived by their incumbents. Most explained their entry into temporary work, whether perceived or actual, as 'fill-ins, while looking for more permanent appointments', though a few conceived their temporary jobs as a means of testing their suitability for training in such professions as social work, teaching and nursing. Respondents' comments illustrate two variants of this latter approach to temporary work; one, now a teacher, advised would-be PGCE entrants:

> (Q.21) Take a year (at least) off if they have not already done so, before entering teaching - get other employment or travel, or voluntary work - anything to broaden experience, and to remove self from teaching scene.

With a slightly different intention in mind, a nurse recommended would-be student nurses to:

> (Q.21) Either gain some experience working during vacations in a hospital or work as a nursing assistant for a few months before committing yourself to a further 3 year course in training.

Nevertheless, the majority of temporary workers at the end of

1979 were not in posts related to professional employment, but in such occupations as clerical workers, receptionists and shop assistants. Most eventually found permanent employment or further training, though only one obtained permanent and higher level work within the organization which initially employed her for a temporary job. (Unfortunately, she subsequently found the permanent post frustrating and lacking in promotion prospects.) The average duration for remaining in temporary posts beyond December 31st 1979 was approximately eight months and only three out of the twenty-three were still working in temporary employment a year later.

In sharp contrast to the previous year, the vast majority of the 1980 group of temporary workers were not in permanent positions which were only perceived as temporary. Eighteen out of the twenty-two 1980 temporary workers occupied short-term fixed-period jobs; sixteen of which were, in one way or another, concerned with teaching. Of the twenty-two, seventeen had studied for a PGCE in the academic year following graduation and a further two were 'trying out' teaching pending entry to PGCE courses in September 1980. A year later at the end of 1981, of the sixteen respondents in temporary teaching posts in December 1980, five were in permanent teaching appointments, two were following PGCE courses, but the remaining nine were either unemployed, not available for employment or still in temporary posts. Only one of the five who obtained permanent teaching appointments, did so in the school she first worked as a temporary teacher.

By the end of 1980, there were also signs that some of the six temporary workers in non-teaching jobs, including some who had

completed a PGCE course, were beginning to recognize that jobs initially perceived as short-term may have to be accepted as permanent. Perhaps the following graduate honestly expresses what several respondents, acting with the benefits of hindsight, never clearly stated, namely that the jobs they recorded on the questionnaire as permanent were originally intended to be temporary:

> (Q.21) As a graduate in a non-graduate job [clerical assistant] within a large organization.....I fear I may throw out the final statistics as I am a 'failure' as far as degree relates to job. Having left the College of Education [where she unsuccessfully studied for a PGCE] I got a job to give me time to work out what to do as I couldn't teach. The temporary job then turned into a permanent one as I found I was happy in an undemanding job with no responsibility attached. I'm afraid I am quite happy with 'a job till I have children' which is an attitude modern girl graduates are supposed to abhor.

Although numerically smaller, those in temporary employment at the end of 1981 faced greater problems than temporary workers of earlier years. Eight of the nine 1981 batch of temporary workers had completed PGCE courses, but had failed to secure the permanent teaching post to which almost all of them aspired. Most of the nine were in short-term teaching posts and four were in similar temporary positions a year earlier. With respect to non-teaching jobs, in view of the probability that the longer one remains in permanent posts the less likely it is to be considered temporary, it is perhaps not surprising that by the end of 1981, few respondents were to be found in perceived temporary posts. One respondent, however, despite having spent twenty-seven months in residential houseparent posts, continued to describe her employment as temporary.

Comparing temporary employment in the three types of colleges,

once again Tables 5.2 and 5.3 suggest that the problems seem most acute for the combination colleges. This latter type had the highest rates of temporary employment in each of the three years; the proto-polytechnics had the lowest.

Unemployment

The proportion of college respondents unable to find employment, despite being available for it, remained at the 11 per cent mark at the end of each of the three years following graduation (Table 5.1). Of the twenty-six who were unemployed at the end of 1979, six continued to be unemployed for the entire period of time covered by the survey; eight eventually obtained permanent work but in rather low status jobs (eg. clerical assistants, van driving and sales assistants); four acquired positions more commensurate with graduate status (eg. graphic designer and trainee journalist); five accepted temporary jobs; two entered teacher training courses and one gained a grant to train as a social worker. The experiences of the majority in this group suggest that there is a fairly high probability that graduates identified as unemployed at the end of the graduating year will continue to encounter career problems in the immediate years following graduation.

Unlike the trend for temporary employment, unemployment at the end of 1980 did not include a substantial influx of graduates who had completed a PGCE course in the academic year following graduation. Only eight of the twenty-three unemployed in December 1980 had taken

PGCE courses and half of the remaining fifteen were unemployed a year earlier. The unemployed group at the end of 1981 consisted of eleven PGCE and sixteen non-PGCE graduates. Although, at the end of 1981, the proportion of unemployed PGCE graduates was only slightly smaller than the proportion of non-PGCE graduates, the former graduates had an average total unemployment time of only nine months compared to fifteen months for non-PGCE graduates. It seems that by taking a PGCE course the 1979 college graduates could significantly reduce the length of time spent in unemployment.

With the benefits of hindsight wisdom, some of the longer-term unemployed who had not taken PGCE courses laid the blame for their predicament at the door of the liberal education values invested in their degree courses. An English and Art graduate, who had been unemployed for twenty-seven months, stated:

> (Q.20i) My degree course was not vocational and did not help me get a job. Such courses should be abolished or radically altered. Today, it is unrealistic to enrich a student's 'personal qualities' and then leave him/her on the dole. Degrees are now so common, that they have lost any 'prestige' that might have been useful in getting a job.

In a similar vein, another graduate, unemployed for a total of twelve months, wrote:

> (Q.20i) ...Taking Drama,TV/English very seriously at college and then at the end of my college career being advised that theatre etc. was a no-go area for people from our type of college and that I should work for the Post Office or something - does rather seem to undercut the validity of the last 4 years.

A Geography/Education and Community Studies graduate, also unemployed for twelve months, believed the nature of her degree to be a cause of

her unemployment:

> (Q.20i) ...the only thing my degree courses did for me were to extend my horizons, interests and experiences and put 'letters after my name'. My degree course was far too broad-based to allow me to compete against university graduates who had specialised in branches of my subject; and for more general graduate entry jobs my degree wasn't of a high enough standard.

Another unemployed graduate, however, did not overlook the fact that she freely chose such courses:

> (Q.20i) My degree courses were, by and large, irrelevant to any job I have had or am likely to have - this is not to criticise the courses - it was me, after all, who chose them.

Teacher training

The single most popular career outlet for the 1979 college respondents was teacher training. Having obtained their first degrees, 36 per cent of the college cohort entered PGCE courses in the following academic year; a further 5 per cent and 3 per cent respectively did likewise in 1980 and 1981 (Table 5.1). With a total of 44 per cent of their graduates having completed post-graduate teacher training, the former colleges of education had substantially higher proportions entering PGCE courses than combination colleges (SS) and proto-polytechnics (SS), the latter closely matching the rates in university and polytechnic first destinations.

Neither should the 44 per cent who embarked upon PGCE courses be taken to represent the upper limits of college graduates'

orientations towards teaching. As Table 5.4 illustrates, a further 15 per cent of respondents would either have liked to have entered teaching ('thwarted teachers') or still intended to do so, circumstances permitting ('aspiring teachers'). As a result, an overall 59 per cent were either involved in teaching or expressed positive orientations towards it. The same table also reveals that only a third of the respondents declared no connections with teaching and were permanently employed in full-time alternative occupations. Furthermore, there is evidence to indicate that during the early years after graduation, teaching continued to attract college graduates from other areas and circumstances.

Table 5.4 Teaching orientations of 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education on 31.12.81

	%		%
Teaching Orientated	59	Completed a PGCE course	44
		Thwarted or Aspiring Teachers	15
Non-Teaching Orientated	41	Not Employed	8
		Permanent Home Employment	33
TOTALS (100%)	247		247

Although a subsequent section will consider the extent of mobility between occupations, it may be noted here that many of the 1980 and 1981 entrants to PGCE courses appeared to be taking up teacher training because of the shortage of suitable alternative employment. The following comments are typical of several later entrants to PGCE courses:

> (Q.11) I wanted a more demanding job than the one above [Employment Assistant in careers office] and teaching seemed to be the type of challenge I was looking for.
>
> (Q.11) Decided [a PGCE course] may lead to professional employment as teacher - disillusioned with general job situation.
>
> (Q.11) [In contrast to previous work as Higher Clerical Officer with a regional health authority] I wanted a job where I could be fully occupied, life was not predictable, and was stimulating.
>
> (Q.11) [Entered PGCE course] In hopes that I will find more job satisfaction, and also because, hopefully, the hours are more sociable than those of my previous work [Residential Child Care Officer].

So extensive was the proportion of respondents who entered PGCE courses that one of the most meaningful ways of describing graduates' early careers is to visualize them as two broad streams: one which undertook teacher training and one which did not.

Taking this approach, Table 5.5 contrasts the latest known career circumstances of PGCE and non-PGCE respondents. Although a slightly higher share of non-PGCE graduates was unemployed and not available for employment, 76 per cent of them, compared to 69 per cent of PGCE respondents, were in permanent employment. The lower percentage of PGCE respondents in employment is perhaps not surprising

in view of the fact that they had spent one year less in the labour market than most of the non-PGCE graduates. In addition, 7 per cent of the PGCE group were still in the process of completing their training and the same proportion were employed in temporary posts, while still applying for permanent appointments. Consequently, there are firm indications for believing that by the end of the following year the proportion of PGCE respondents in permanent employment would match, and probably surpass, that of the non-PGCE group.

Table 5.5 Primary classification details of 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education on 31.12.81

	PGCE respondents (31.12.81)	Non-PGCE respondents (31.12.81)
	%	%
Research/Academic Study	1	1
Teacher Training	7	0
Social Work Training	0	1
Other Training	4	2
Not Available for Employment	2	5
Permanent Home Employment	69	76
Temporary Home Employment	7	1
Temporary Overseas Employment	0	1
Unemployed	10	12
Unknown	0	1
TOTALS (100%)	108	139

Closer examination of differences between these two streams can be taken a step further by considering the rates and areas of employment entered by the respondents. However, before turning to the topic of employment trends, it is worth pausing to consider the entry of graduates into training for occupations other than teaching.

Training for other occupations

As with teacher training, the highest participation in training for other occupations occurred at the end of the graduating year and then declined to lower levels in subsequent years. Accordingly, whereas in December 1979, 8 per cent of college respondents were undertaking other training (including legal and social work training), only 3 per cent were doing so by the end of 1980 and 1981 (Table 5.1).

Apart from training for the teaching profession, the most prevalent form of occupational training was concerned with secretarial work. Thirteen out of the nineteen who were in non-teacher training at the end of 1979 completed secretarial and personal assistant courses. By the end of 1981, almost all of the respondents who had completed such courses, which usually lasted about six to ten months, were to be found in full-time secretarial work. One or two respondents clearly appreciated the experience of these courses:

> (Q.20ii) The Bi-lingual secretarial course helped to improve my French tremendously and develop my skills.

Most, however; expressed serious reservations about training for this type of employment. The following were typical:

> (Q.21) Intensive one-year personal assistant course invaluable for present employment. However in retrospect and considering future prospects in this field I would not advise this type of course for a graduate - not intellectually stimulating or demanding of initiative.....[I would warn present students] not to be taken in by prospect of position as 'graduate secretary' - few posts available worthy of

graduate candidate's educational background - almost exclusively in London. Salary low even in comparison with teaching.

(Q.21) Secretarial work - I think it is best to undertake a full academic year of secretarial training and get the best skill qualifications possible as the better secretarial jobs generally ask for these, and employers can pick and choose at the moment. Even with a degree and good skill qualifications it is still a battle to get a decent job. There seems to be quite a high turnover of secretaries generally, so getting some sort of a job is, comparatively, not difficult. However, because secretarial work is 'women's work' it is often underrated and underpaid. I think you have to be lucky to be able to move up or sideways from secretarial work - I hoped it would be a spring-board into something else eventually, but I can see that it may take a long time.

(Q.21) As my present position [a legal secretary] is not strictly a graduate post I am not sure if this is applicable. However, if it is, I would not advise anyone graduating in a similar discipline [English/History] to embark on a Secretarial Course as the way to to a senior, non-secretarial position, as in my experience and that of my colleagues, there is very small scope for this. One tends to end up merely as a secretary which is boring, subordinate and frustrating, although adequately paid. On the other hand, if one does acquire these skills there is always employment available which is advantageous in the present economic climate although not in the long term.

Whereas the proportion in secretarial training started high and then declined during the following years, the proportion training for nursing started low and increased slightly so that by the end of 1981 they accounted for five of the eight in non-teacher training. However, the training period for graduates in SRN nursing is usually two or three years, so nursing respondents generally appear in more than one of the year ending percentages for training. Altogether, six of the 247 college respondents undertook nurse training at some time since leaving college. Opinions on the life of a student SRN nurse were evenly balanced: some clearly disliked the demands made on them by a work situation which differed in many respects from the life-styles

possible within the cultural climate of a college:

> (Q.21) [For nurses] long term prospects might be better with a degree but initial training is difficult to put up with due to 'subservient' side of the job.

> (Q.11) I wished to work as a nurse. The reasons I left were that my training was extremely unsatisfactory and attitudes to myself were unfavourable.

Others, perhaps more strongly motivated, appeared to have been more successful in making the necessary adjustments:

> (Q.21) I think that nursing is an unusual career choice for graduates, especially with the new nursing degree courses. There are some courses of 2 years for graduates of any profession, but I chose the 3 year SRN as there seems to be so much to learn! Nursing is very often dismissed as a career, but I think that any undergraduate who is interested in working with people, and isn't afraid of going back to the 'bottom of the pile' after three years of college, should consider nursing, at least - people thinking of teaching, social work etc. I am almost certain that I would not have enjoyed nursing at 18 years of age, as I lacked the ability to talk to people and see things from their point of view - college gave me a chance to mature enough to do this and nursing is an ideal job for me as I can use my love of communicating every day.

In addition to secretarial work and nursing, respondents who undertook other training included one in each of the following fields: the ministry; vocational guidance, hotel and catering, social work and legal training. Extending the nurses' comments concerning the 'culture shock' of demanding training courses, the sole trainee solicitor complained of the mismatch between the rigours of his occupational training and the academic quality of his college experience:

> (Q.21) [Prospective trainee solicitors should] be prepared to work to a degree which can make you 'crack' if not totally committed to the end product. Having undergone no pressure at college, I was thrust into a world of exams with a high failure rate and exacting standards. The Law Society Exams have a 50% pass mark. There are 8 exams - fail

> one - fail them all. Over 50% of graduates taking the exam failed last year.....The courses which I undertook at college [English/History] were on the face of it more than adequate. However, the general standard of many students reduced the style of teaching to little above 'A' level standard. There was a total lack of pressure academically which could have led to a state of academic lethargy. In my final year (3), I had approximately 3/4 lectures per week, very little set work and end of semester examinations which were held in a most casual and arbitrary style. Therefore, courses provided no incentive to achieve anything above a moderate standard.

The above comments raise questions of whether or not more should be done, not only to prepare undergraduates for the anticipated problems of postgraduate 'culture shock', but also to increase their awareness of possible differences between liberal 'educational' experiences and vocational 'training' ones.

Permanent employment

At the end of 1979, one third of college respondents were in full-time permanent employment. At the end of 1980, as a consequence of a substantial pool of graduates who found full-time work upon completion of training courses, mainly in teaching, the proportion of respondents in permanent employment had doubled to two-thirds. A year later in December 1981, the latest known proportion in permanent employment had reached 73 per cent. Although, on the basis of Table 5.5, there are sound grounds for predicting that the most recently trained PGCE graduates would increase the number of employed in 1982, it must also be noted that the probable increase in the numbers 'not available for emloyment' would offset these additions to the overall

employment rate.

Due to the absence of any appropriate previous or comparative information, it is difficult to evaluate the adequacy of the latest known employment rate of 73 per cent. Williamson's UMS study (1981), the most recent early careers survey of university and polytechnic graduates, was based on the 1970-1977 graduate labour market, which, for reasons presented earlier, cannot be legitimately compared with that of the late 70s and early 80s. Moreover, the UMS survey focused on graduates' employment six years after graduation, in contrast to the thirty months period covered by this study. Virtually, all that are available, despite their obvious limitations, are the tentative comparisons that can be drawn with the employment rates for the two other college types included in the present survey.

Taking this approach, Table 5.2 shows that in contrast to the 73 per cent for former college of education graduates, only 51 per cent of combination college respondents were in permanent employment at the end of 1981 (SS). On the other hand, Table 5.3 indicates that 77 per cent was the corresponding proportion for proto-polytechnic respondents. Given that this latter type of college was the closest to the first destination employment rates for university and polytechnic graduates, and assuming that first destination variations in employment rates persisted over the period covered by the survey, then it may be estimated that, at the end of 1981, university and polytechnic graduates would have had employment rates of around 80 to 85 per cent respectively. Interestingly, these percentages matched the rates some college commentators hoped that college graduates would have achieved

by the end of 1981. It would appear, therefore, that while the latest known employment rate for former college of education respondents should certainly not be considered a discreditable one, neither does it give rise to a great deal of satisfaction. Although a tolerable percentage, it does suggest that difficulties were encountered by college respondents in their search for permanent employment, irrespective of how graduates from other institutions fared.

The first destination statistics presented in Chapter Four, especially in Table 4.3, demonstrated that very few college graduates had entered permanent employment in the industrial sector and most were employed in public service and commerce. Following the subsequent entry of many PGCE graduates into full-time teaching appointments, at the end of 1981, the proportion in industry was even smaller and the majority were to be found in education and public service.

Table 5.6 shows that, of the 180 college respondents permanently employed at the end of 1981, 39 per cent were employed in education, predominantly in schools; roughly a quarter worked in public service, mainly in local government and hospitals; another quarter were employed in industry and commerce with approximately equal proportions in each category; and a further 11 per cent were to be found in the employment area known as 'All Others'.

Table 5.6 Employer categories of 1979 non-BEd respondents who were in permanent employment on 31.12.81

	Former Colls. of Education	Combination Colleges	Proto-polytechnics
	%	%	%
Civil/Diplomatic Service	8	5	4
HM Forces	0	0	3
Local Govt/Hospital Service	15	18	10
ALL PUBLIC SERVICE	(23)	(23)	(17)
Schools	35	9	21
FE Colleges	2	0	4
Polytechnics	1	5	0
Universities	1	0	3
ALL EDUCATION	(39)	(14)	(28)
Agriculture/Forestry	1	0	0
Oil, Chemical & Allied Industries	2	0	7
Engineering & Allied Industries	2	5	7
Other Manufacturing	6	5	17
Building, Civil Engineering	0	0	0
Public Utility & Transport	3	5	4
Accountancy	2	0	0
Banking, Insurance	2	5	3
Other Commerce	9	5	14
ALL INDUSTRY/COMMERCE	(27)	(25)	(52)
Solicitors	1	0	0
Pubs., Cultural & Entertainment	4	33	3
Others	6	5	0
ALL OTHERS	(11)	(38)	(3)
TOTALS	180	29	21
	(100%)		

Similar proportions of combination college respondents were employed in public service and industry and commerce, though fewer were located in education (14 per cent, SS) and substantially more in the 'Publishers, Cultural and Entertainment' category (33 per cent, SS). In marked contrast to the two other college types, over half of the proto-polytechnic respondents who were permanently employed worked in industry and commerce. Also, rather surprisingly for this type of college, 28 per cent of their graduates were employed in education. This unexpectedly high proportion of proto-polytechnic respondents involved in teaching is also evident in Table 5.7, which presents details of the kinds of work carried out by those in permanent employment at the end of 1981.

Table 5.7 Type of work categories of 1979 non-BEd respondents who were in permanent employment on 31.12.81

	Former Colls. of Education	Combination Colleges	Proto-Poly-technics
	%	%	%
General Traineeships	0	0	0
Non-Specialist Admin.	10	5	10
Scientific R,D & D.	1	0	0
Environmental Planning	1	0	7
Scientific Analysis	2	0	0
Production Operation	1	0	0
Buying, Marketing, Selling	9	14	31
Services to Management	1	5	4
Financial Work	4	5	10
Legal Work	1	0	0
Creative/Entertainment work	2	19	0
Information, Advisory, Research	4	0	7
Library, Museum, Archives	1	5	4
Personnel	2	0	0
Health & Social Welfare	6	9	0
Teaching	36	19	24
Secretarial, Clerical	18	14	3
Others	1	5	0
TOTALS (100%)	180	29	21

Given the preponderance of college graduates who embarked on post-graduate teacher training, it is not surprising that Table 5.7 demonstrates that teaching was the main type of work engaged in at the end of 1981: 36 per cent of college respondents in permanent employment were teachers. By comparison, the proto-polytechnic respondents had a higher than expected corresponding proportion of 24 per cent. This seems to be due to the fact that the teacher trained proto-polytechnic respondents found full-time teaching appointments at a higher rate than did their college counterparts: all six of the former were employed in permanent teaching posts at the end of 1981, while only sixty-three out of 108 of the latter were likewise employed - although, as noted earlier, a further sixteen were either still in training or temporary employment and it was felt that by the end of 1982, many of these would have found permanent employment in teaching.

Turning to occupations other than teaching, it was suggested in Chapter Four that the major type of work categories entered by college graduates - relative, at least, to university and polytechnic graduates - were, in descending order of significance: 'Secretarial & Clerical Work'/'General Administration', 'Buying, Marketing & Selling', and to a lesser extent, 'Health & Social Welfare'. It was argued that, following the pattern of existing literature, these areas of work were considered to be highly susceptible to the process of 'filtering down' - graduates entering occupations lacking a tradition of graduate entry or status.

Looking at Table 5.7, it is very noticeable that the type of work categories identified in Chapter Four as the most significant at the end of 1979 are precisely those which emerge as the most prevalent at the end of 1981, namely: 'Secretarial and Clerical Work' (18 per cent), 'General Administration' (10 per cent), 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' (9 per cent), and 'Health & Social Welfare' (6 per cent). Correspondingly, those types of work which appeared in Chapter Four as almost 'no-go' areas for college graduates (eg. 'Scientific RD&D', 'Environmental Planning', 'Production Operation', 'Services to Management', 'Legal work', 'Creative/Entertainment work' and 'Personnel' etc.) remained as such for the duration of the period covered by the survey.

Since these findings seemed particularly important, in order to scrutinize them more rigourously, the data were subjected to an alternative method of coding types of work: an occupational classification used by the 1971 Qualified Manpower Follow-up Survey and presented in Williamson (1981). As Table 5.8 demonstrates, the results undoubtedly verify the conclusions reached above. Apart from teaching (36 per cent), the major occupations attained by college respondents who were permanently employed at the end of 1981, consisted of clerical workers (22 per cent), general administrators (7 per cent), retail management (4 per cent), sales representatives (3 per cent), and social or welfare work (4 per cent).

Table 5.8 Occupational categories<a> of 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education

Occupational Groups	% of permanently employed on December 31st 1981
Teachers	36
Clerical workers	22
General administrators	7
Retail management	4
Social or welfare work	4
Sales representatives	3
Trainee accountants	2
Graphic designers	2
Researchers	2
Assistant librarians	2
Trainee Personnel Officers	2
All others (1% or less)	14
TOTAL (100%)	180

NOTES

<a> Based on Qualified Manpower Follow-up Survey (Williamson 1981)

Overall then, the survey findings on the employment areas entered by college graduates substantially confirm the tentative interpretations presented in Chapter Four. Any hopes that the early signs of considerable 'filtering down' would disappear as graduates' careers progressed seem to have been illfounded. Moreover, the results indicate that during the period covered by the survey, a large proportion of respondents have been unable to develop their careers through entry to occupations more compatible with their graduate standing.

One immediate qualification that must be made to the above interpretation is that not all college graduates were equally vulnerable to the problem of 'filtering down'. Of the two streams depicted earlier, namely, PGCE and non-PGCE college graduates, the former showed few signs of having to move down market in search of jobs. Table 5.9 reveals that that at the end of 1981, although 15 per cent of PGCE college graduates appeared to have entered non-graduate areas of work similar to those who did not follow a PGCE course, 85 per cent of the PGCE stream were employed as teachers.

Table 5.9 Type of work categories of 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education who were permanently employed on 31.12.81

	PGCE Stream	Non-PGCE Stream
	%	%
General Traineeships	0	0
Non-specialist administration	3	15
Scientific R & D	0	2
Environmental Planning	0	1
Scientific Analysis	0	3
Production Operation	0	1
Buying, Marketing, Selling	1	14
Services to Management	0	3
Financial work	0	6
Legal work	0	1
Creative and Entertainment	0	5
Information, Advisory, Research	1	6
Library, Museum, Archives	0	2
Personnel	0	4
Health and Social Welfare	4	7
Teaching	85	2
Secretarial, Clerical	6	27
Others	0	1
TOTALS (100%)	74	106

Thus, it may be said that by taking a teacher training course, college graduates can substantially reduce their chances of encountering 'filtering down' and its experiential effect of underemployment. Similar advantages emerge for the PGCE stream in relation to two topics to which we now turn; occupational status and salaries.

Occupational status

An unavoidable shortcoming of the argument presented above is that, inspite of the validity of the reasoning followed, instances of 'filtering down' are dependent upon inferences being drawn from the relative proportions in each of the type of work categories. What is required is a direct method of checking that the areas of work typically attained by college graduates are in fact highly associated with occupations lacking a tradition of graduate entry and status. Hence, in order to extend the discussion beyond the inferential and indirect approach; a rudimentary attempt has been made to classify graduates' occupational status according to the researcher's subjective appraisal of respondents' replies. Additionally, for the purposes of subsequent analyses (see Chapter Six), the capacity to identify high and low status employees constituted a further reason for carrying out such a classification, albeit a fairly basic one. Existing and more sophisticated instruments for ranking occupational status were rejected, usually on the grounds that they tended to be rather dated, based on foreign occupational structures and insensitive to the

specific characteristics of the graduate labour market involved.

The occupational status classifications adopted here were based on three criteria:

1. respondents' comments volunteering their own perceptions of the status of their work (eg. "I am a graduate in a non-graduate job" or "I did not need my degree to enter this area of work.");

2. indications of suitable graduate entry occupations as contained in the coding frame for the Qualified Manpower Follow-up Survey (see Williamson 1981);

3. in the event of (1) and (2) proving insufficient, the researcher's subjective assessment of the normal qualification requirements for the occupation concerned.

Details of respondent's employment circumstances on December 31st 1981 were then used to assign them to one of the following categories:

Not employed - all respondents who were not in full-time permanent employment;

Low status - respondents in posts which would normally require 'O' levels or less;

Medium status - respondents in posts which would normally require 'A levels;

Graduate status - respondents in posts with a tradition of graduate entry.

Examples of the kinds of occupations in each status category are offered throughout the following interpretation of the results.

Covering each of the three types of college, Table 5.10 presents the results of this analysis. The first row shows that the colleges and the proto-polytechnics had similar proportions who were not in employment (27 and 25 per cent respectively), but the combination colleges had the much larger proportion of 49 per cent (SS).

Table 5.10 Occupational status of 1979 non-BEd respondents according to their employment circumstances on 31.12.81

	Former Colls. of Education	Combination Colleges	Proto-Polytechnics
	%	%	%
Not employed	27	49	25
Low status employees	7	2	0
Medium status employees	27	27	8
Graduate status employees:	(39)	(22)	(67)
Teachers	26	5	18
Non-teachers	13	17	49
TOTALS (100%)	247	41	39

Cramer's V = .20 (SS for the first four rows)

7 per cent of college respondents were employed in low status occupations, a slightly higher rate than the other two types of colleges. The majority of these seventeen low status workers were to be found in the type of work categories, 'Secretarial & Clerical Work' and 'Buying, Marketing & Selling'. Most of those in the former category worked as typists or general office clerks and one, a clerical worker with the DHSS, typically reported:

> (Q.21) I would advise anyone about to enter the Civil Service to enter at the highest level possible for their qualifications. I have entered at a level which only requires 'O' levels and to gain promotion I will have to take examinations and Boards. If I had applied at the outset for a higher level I could have made a direct entry.

Most of the low status workers in 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' were sales assistants in shops or furniture salesrooms and two had been appointed as assistant managers of small retailers. One sales assistant expressed the common complaint:

> (Q.20i) ....anyone with a reasonable level of intelligence could do my present job - I did not need my degree.

Another salesperson, although typical in so far that he felt his work was not as intellectually stimulating as he hoped a graduate's job would be, was atypical in his perceptions of the tensions he felt between the demeaning status ascribed to his job and the potential scope that he believed existed in his work in an ironmongery shop:

> (Q.21) No matter what knowledge or skill you have in a particular field it has little importance to the average tradesperson who will still quite often treat you as being the lowest of the low. By comparison though, there are certain rewards gained through dealing with customers and their problems that can give rewards far greater than I can express in a few short words. So this leaves me in a

> constant state of confusion about my opinions of my job. I dislike it as a result of the stereotype 'shop assistant' - non-helpful, not interested, not very well informed image (which happens to be the opposite of my particular role in my shop) against the rewards of problem solving on behalf of the customer.

Other low status occupations included a van driver, a postal officer, library assistants and general accounts clerks.

At the other end of the scale, while 26 per cent of college respondents had achieved graduate status by working within the teaching profession, only 13 per cent of all college respondents had attained graduate status in occupations other than teaching. This finding highlights the extent of the difficulties faced by college graduates when trying to find appointments commensurate with graduate status entry yet unrelated to the teaching profession. By comparison, the corresponding proportions with non-teaching graduate status occupations from combination colleges and proto-polytechnics were 17 and 49 per cent (SS) respectively.

A quite remarkable feature of the 13 per cent of college respondents in graduate status work is that nearly all were to be found in type of work categories not typically obtained by college graduates ie. those in type of work categories with percentages under 6 per cent in Table 5.7, except for 'Information, Advisory, & Non-scientific research', which included more medium status respondents. Conversely, only three of the thirty-one graduate status workers were located in either 'Secretarial/Clerical work' or 'General Administration' and none were to be found in 'Buying, Marketing & Selling'. Consequently, areas of work with high proportions of college graduates were not associated

with graduate status, but areas of work with low involvement of college graduates were. This finding strongly suggests that considerable credence can be given to the 'filtering down' inferences drawn from the type of work categories discussed in the previous section.

It also indicates the kinds of jobs college graduates may have to compete for if they want to take a greater share of the available graduate status employment in areas other than teaching. Such areas of work included (in descending order of frequency) accountants, executive officers in the civil service, journalists, computer programmers; social workers, graphic designers and personnel officers. For graduates from the other two college types, the occupational categories, 'Secretarial & Clerical work' and 'General Administration', were associated with low status employment, but the category 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' contained several proto-polytechnic graduates who were working as sales executives and as such were awarded high status classification.

In between the two extremes of the status scale, 27 per cent of college respondents held occupations which were classified as medium status. This proportion was the same for combination college respondents, but lower for proto-polytechnic respondents, 8 per cent (SS) of whom were assigned to the medium status level.

Just over half of the sixty-seven college respondents in the medium status category were to be found in either 'Secretarial/Clerical work' or 'General Administration'. Of these, the most common occupations were secretaries, civil servant clerical officers (as

distinct from civil servant executive officers, who were given graduate status ranking), administrative assistants in health and local government institutions, and general administrative personnel in sports and leisure centres. In contrast to the proto-polytechnic respondents' orientations towards sales executive jobs; typical occupations among the eleven college respondents in the 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' area of work included assistant or departmental manageresses in large stores, branch managers in smaller retail outlets and various sales representatives. A further five medium status workers were located in the 'Health & Social Welfare' category and included three residential care officers, a policeman and an assistant home help organizer.

Overall then, three quarters of those employed in medium status occupations were to be found in the type of work categories most commonly entered by college graduates. Once again, these findings confirm earlier inferential interpretations which suggested that, in the case of college graduates, the most frequently entered type of work areas were indicative of a substantial degree of moving down the labour market to work of a lower status than that normally accepted by first degree graduates.

Given the finding that 27 per cent of college respondents were able to find graduate status by entering the teaching profession, it is not difficult to appreciate why, when compared to the alternatives, teaching remains a very attractive proposition for many college graduates. The status rewards derived from teaching are clearly demonstrated in Table 5.11, which contrasts the occupational status rankings of the PGCE stream with those of the non-PGCE stream. 59 per

cent of the former compared to 23 per cent of the latter had attained graduate status (SS), while conversely, 9 per cent of the former compared to 53 per cent of the latter were in medium or low status occupations (SS). Moreover, as we shall see in the following section, status was not the only benefit which college graduates found difficult to obtain in occupations other than teaching.

Table 5.11 Occupational status of 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education according to their employment circumstances on 31.12.81

	PGCE stream		Non-PGCE stream	
	%		%	
Not employed	32		24	
Low status employees	1		11	
Medium status employees	8		42	
Graduate status employees:		(59)		(23)
Teachers	58		1	
Non-teachers	1		22	
TOTALS (100%)	108		139	

Cramer's V = .48 (SS for the first four rows)

Latest known salaries

Approximately 78 per cent of all non-BEd respondents who were in permanent employment at the end of 1981 provided details of their gross monthly income. These details were then grouped into the seven categories presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Salaries held by 1979 non-BEd respondents who were permanently employed on 31.12.81

Gross monthly income (£)	Former Colls. of Education %	Combination Colleges %	Proto-Polytechnics %
Under 200	1	0	0
201 - 300	11	17	0
301 - 400	23	35	9
401 - 500	47	12	17
501 - 600	13	12	39
601 - 700	4	18	26
Above 700	1	6	9
TOTALS (100%)	137	17	23
No. of permanently employed respondents who did not provide salary details:	43	4	6

From this table, it is clear that a larger proportion of proto-polytechnic respondents commanded higher salaries than respondents from other types of colleges. The modal income group, that is, the income category with the highest number of cases, was £500-600 a month for proto-polytechnic respondents; they had the highest

proportion in the £600-700 bracket and none earned less than £300 per month. This largely reflected the number of well-paid sales executives among their ranks. In contrast, the college respondents were highly concentrated in a lower modal group of £400-500 a month, had larger proportions in the lower income brackets and fewer in the higher ones. The combination college respondents displayed an even lower modal income, £300-400 a month.

Looking in more detail at the salaries of college respondents, it is noticeable that, although half of those permanently employed at the end of 1981 had secured the salaries of between £400-500 a month, only a small number had surpassed this amount and over a third had salaries of less than £400 a month. Furthermore, in turning to Table 5.13, it becomes apparent that the main reasons for college respondents showing up well in the middle of the salary range are the moderate but sound salaries procured by the substantial numbers working as teachers.

Table 5.13 Salaries held by 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education who were in permanent employment on 31.12.81

Gross monthly income (£)	PGCE stream %	Non-PGCE stream %
Under 200	0	1
201 - 300	6	15
301 - 400	11	30
401 - 500	57	41
501 - 600	20	9
601 - 700	6	2
Above 700	0	2
TOTALS (100%)	54	83

Whereas 77 per cent of the PGCE stream earned between £400-600 per month, approaching half of the non-PGCE stream were working for less than £400 a month. Put another way, while the average mean monthly salary for the PGCE stream was £459, the same for the non-PGCE stream was £407. Consequently, a comparison of the salaries achieved by PGCE and non-PGCE respondents suggests that the comparative financial benefits and security to be gained by entering teaching may act as an additional inducement towards that profession.

This conclusion is reinforced by the results presented in Table 5.14, which contrasts the latest known income attained by college respondents in each of the main types of work entered by these graduates. In contrast to other occupations, teachers had the lowest proportions with monthly salaries under £400 and the highest proportions in the £400-600 range, although they had slightly fewer reaching the highest salary brackets. In addition, it should also be remembered that these differential amounts had been secured in spite of the fact that teaching respondents had spent a full year less in employment than most of the respondents in other occupations. Clerical work, which, after teaching was the main occupational area obtained by college graduates, had the highest percentage of respondents with lower range salaries: two-thirds of clerical workers earned less than £400 a month.

Table 5.14 Distribution of salaries in each of the main types of work held by former college of education 1979 non-BEd respondents who were permanently employed on 31.12.81

(£)	Teaching %	Clerical %	General Admin. %	Buying, Marketing & Selling %	Health/Social Welfare %
Under 200	0	4	0	0	0
201-300	2	22	7	0	9
301-400	7	41	29	34	18
401-500	61	29	50	33	55
501-600	26	4	0	22	9
601-700	4	0	0	11	9
Above 700	0	0	14	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	46	27	14	9	11

Internal promotion and upgrading of work

Faced with a declining number of vacancies in jobs conventionally associated with graduate entry, many graduates were advised to seek lower status work in the hope that, having gained 'a foot in the door', internal promotion to positions more appropriate to a graduate's intelligence and standing would quickly follow. It was advocated that, once ensconced within an employing organization, the graduate could court promotion by displaying more initiative and skills than could the non-graduate counterpart. Similarly, according to a related argument, it has been suggested that it is not the case that jobs associated with 'filtering down' always demean the graduates; sometimes the graduates, with their higher intellectual capabilities, upgrade the quality and skills requirements of the jobs performed. In

this sense, 'upgrading of work' denotes the alleged increase in the actual quality of the skills required by a job and not, as is sometimes the meaning intended, the rise in the level of qualification demanded by an occupation. The widespread existence of this latter phenomena is not disputed, as the survey findings clearly demonstrate. What is being questioned is the claim that there are frequent instances of graduates gaining recognition for an extension in the skill requirements of less demanding work.

In order to subject these opinions to some empirical investigation, the survey findings have been scanned for instances of job upgrading and internal promotion. For these purposes, 'internal promotion' has been defined as the upward movement, within the same employing organization, between posts which were qualitatively different in terms of supervisory levels, status or skill requirements. Respondents who entered employment as trainees in an occupation in which they subsequently qualified were excluded as examples of internal promotion, though respondents who entered in one occupational capacity and then were promoted to train for another were included. Focusing only on college respondents in non-teaching occupations, it should be recalled that the analysis is limited to a period of thirty months after graduation - some proponents of the viewpoints just advanced may want to argue that a longer time scale is required before early indications of the extent of internal promotions and job upgrading can be adequately assessed.

Of the thirty-one respondents in graduate status non-teaching jobs at the end of 1981, five (16 per cent) advanced to these positions

through internal promotion routes. They included two residential social workers who were promoted to supervisory levels, a student accountant promoted from a receptionist, a computer systems analyst from an accounts clerk, and an accounts executive from an executive assistant. At the time of completing the questionnaire, the two residential social workers had occupied their new posts for two and three months, the computer analyst for nine months; and the student accountant and accounts executive for twenty months each.

In stressing the importance of getting on to the first step, one of the residential social workers clearly subscribed to the 'foot in the door' technique: "il n'y a que le premier pas qui coute". The other, however, signalled a problem that was encountered by numerous college respondents - how do you gain entry to lower status jobs and then proceed successfully to higher positions, when so many employers, and their existing staff, view you as threats to themselves and as overeducated for the jobs in question?

> (Q.21) Heads of small residential establishments may be suspicious and reluctant to employ graduates who are better qualified than themselves.

As we shall see in Part Two, in an effort to resolve such problems, some graduates resorted to concealing the fact that they possessed a degree and others sought boring temporary jobs in order to demonstrate to potential employers their ability to carry out monotonous work without becoming frustrated by the lack of opportunities and intellectual challenges.

With a more optimistic outlook, the receptionist who was promoted to a computer analyst encouraged prospective entrants to this field to seek out employers who would be willing to place them on training courses leading to further qualifications. Few of her peers, however, were able to find such opportunities. Out of the eighty-four respondents in non-graduate status employment at the end of 1981, only thirteen (15 per cent) had or were studying for qualifications in connection with, and while working in, their current job. Studying for these qualifications was normally on a part-time or day release basis and the most frequently sought were the Institute of Personnel Management examinations, for which three respondents were preparing.

Of the sixty-seven in medium status occupations on the 31st December 1981, eight (12 per cent) had reached their latest known appointments through internal promotion: five were in 'General Administration', two in 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' and one in 'Secretarial/Clerical Work'. Three of the eight remained quite positive about their promotion experiences and future prospects. A publisher's representative, for example, was still optimistic, if somewhat guarded in tone:

> (Q.21) Publishing is a highly competitive business and, particularly in the present economic climate, one in which suitable vacancies and then movement for promotions are thin on the ground.....Although I was advised not to enter publishing as a secretary, I do know of several who have successfully made the transition from secretarial to editorial roles - this may still be a possibility for those seeking a place in publishing.

Likewise, a clerk typist in a social services department was also fairly hopeful:

> (Q.11) [My move from typist to clerk typist] represents a genuine promotion - work more varied and interesting. Also can be a way in to unqualified social work posts - [my] ultimate ambition. Also lots more money.

On the other hand, five of the eight were, to varying degrees, disillusioned with their experiences of internal promotion. For instance, an administrative assistant in a polytechnic (promoted from a clerical assistant) described the frequently mentioned problem of working in 'dead-end jobs or departments':

> (Q.21) I would advise any students not to get into a job where there are no prospects of advancement. Faculty-based admin. assistants, in this institution anyway, cannot advance in their career unless they leave the faculties.

Similarly, other administrative workers were frustrated by their new posts:

> (Q.21, a research writer in a publishing firm) The salary is good but the job satisfaction is minimal. It is very repetitive - mainly checking printed matter and transferring information from cards to printer's slips. There is no chance of a career there - for a student leaving college I would advise him to do a Post-graduate course to achieve a relevant qualification for a career.

> (Q.21, a general administrative assistant in a health authority) [Students interested in my current area of employment] should be prepared for a job which is much more tedious than their time at college, and also for some suspicion, from colleagues but more especially superiors, of people with degrees.

Finally, a promoted assistant staff manager in a large chain store had decided that the benefits of the firm's well-established promotion structure could not compensate for the job's drawbacks:

> (Q.21) I would advise any student to consider carefully the commitment involved in entering the Retail Industry, in particular, the long hours, no overtime payments and a fairly low salary in the training stage. The turnover of trainees in the retail industry is very high, because many of the above are not considered carefully enough! The problem of mobility within a variety chain store also causes trainees to resign. It is very easy to agree to moving around the country in theory, but in practice, given a week or two weeks notice to move 200 miles is not quite as easy!!

As a result, she had set her sights on a new career as a teacher of mentally-handicapped children.

In addition to those for whom the experience of promotion fell short of initial expectations, it must be noted that overall, there were fewer respondents who had achieved promotion than respondents who volunteered comments on the lack of promotion opportunities. Secretaries in particular, often expressed their frustration with the many obstacles which thwarted their attempts to use this area of work as a springboard into more rewarding jobs. One comment to this effect has already been presented in an earlier section ('Other training'), another succinctly summarized some of the weaknesses in the upgrading of work and the 'foot in the door' arguments:

> (Q.21) Secretarial posts are easy to obtain, considering the level of unemployment and the difficulty of finding a job which demands a graduate's level of education. However, I would not advise people to enter secretarial work as the postions I have experienced have been mundane and soul destroying. Also, it is very difficult to avoid the inertia connected to secretarial posts; once ensconced in typing and filing, it is very difficult to break this image created in employers' minds.

Clerical workers, especially in civil service departments, also felt disheartened by demeaning and restrictive work situations. Again,

an illustration of this was offered earlier ('Occupational status'), but the following comments from civil servant clerical workers were also typical of this type:

> (Q.21) [advice to prospective entrants to civil service clerical work....] Don't! Unless you are the type to enjoy working for a Department of the civil service (DHSS) which is grossly inefficient. You should also have the ability not to mind any initiative exercised by you being squashed by petty bureaucratic rules. There is no room for commonsense in this area of employment.

> (Q.21) Try somewhere else!! Actually, it may not be as bad as an Executive Officer, but if you have to take a Clerical Officer post you have very little hope of promotion but are expected always to give a high standard of work with little thanks. In gaining a degree I had hoped for something better, however it is a secure job which is something in this day and age.

For a final illustration of blocked promotion aspirations, several respondents urged prospective entrants to be sceptical of employers' offers and promises of organized career development schemes:

> (Q.21, Transport administration trainee) From my own experience I cannot recommend too strongly to graduates that they do not accept glossy graduate recruitment literature as being an accurate reflection of career development within an organization. During interviews graduates should meticulously examine the offer of employment being made to them by asking a comprehensive catalogue of detailed questions. In short some recruitment literature can be deceitful to say the least. An advertised course of training in the field of bus operations management with [my employers] has in reality turned out to be a clerical merry-go round rotating every three months around various administrative departments.

> (Q.21) Don't become too enthusiastic with the pretence of graduate training schemes or career development. Having now returned to college [to study for a PGCE after working as a Higher Clerical Officer in an area health authority] I have met many who have left work as it was boring, not stimulating, [poor] pay and holidays, limited conversation.

Overall then, on the grounds of the evidence derived from the survey, it would seem imprudent to invest too much faith in either the 'foot in the door' strategy or the upgrading of work argument, especially the latter. Although the evidence suggests that certain employing organizations offer better promotion prospects than others and that some isolated individuals have successfully advanced through internal promotion routes (eg. the receptionist who progressed to a computer analyst), these appear, however, to be the exceptions which prove a more general rule. Only a small fraction of all college respondents had progressed to graduate or medium status employment through internal promotion and several of these had subsequently become disenchanted by their experiences. Constituting an additional barrier, it was found that only a small proportion of respondents were involved in studying for further qualifications.

The open-ended responses have highlighted a whole series of reasons why trusting to internal promotion and job upgrading strategies could be beguiling. These included, being overeducated for lower status jobs and promotion, the suspicions of many employers and their non-graduate staff, becoming ensconced in 'dead-end' departments and tedious occupations; unacceptable demands in such areas as the retail trade, the unfulfilled expectations of career development schemes, the lack of opportunities for displaying initiative, the drift into inertia as a result of prolonged exposure to demeaning work, and the immense difficulties of breaking the menial worker mould once cast and stereotyped. The latter difficulties make the chances of upgrading work particularly improbable. Significantly, not a single case of this

type was reported in the respondents' replies. Perhaps the closest example was the worker in the ironmongery shop, who was endeavouring to construct an image of himself similar to a technical sales adviser, despite having to accommodate himself to the conventional perceptions of his prescribed role as a shop assistant. Unfortunately, there was no evidence to indicate that he had succeeded in gaining acceptance for his own upgraded perspective on the occupation.

Occupational mobility

Although the size of the sample, in relation at least to the range of the occupations entered, is insufficient to extract any detailed observations of graduates' occupational mobility, a number of general points concerning the occupational movements of the group as a whole may still be made.

Table 5.15, for example, indicates the duration of the jobs held by respondents who were permanently employed on the 1st October 1979 or the 31st December 1981. With reference to the former, duration of the job held refers to the number of calendar months a respondent remained in the same post after the specified date - respondents who left their post for a different one with the same employer were counted as having left their initial employment. In the case of latest known occupations, duration of the job held denotes the number of calendar months for which a respondent had occupied the post held on 31st December 1981.

Table 5:15 Duration of first and latest known permanent jobs held by 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education

	Time spent in permanent job held on 1/10/79<a>		Time spent in permanent job held on 31/12/81<b>	
Months	N	%	N	%
3 and under	6	(2)	5	(2)
4 - 6	4	(2)	28	(11)
7 - 9	11	(4)	11	(5)
10 - 12	10	(4)	9	(4)
13 - 15	4	(2)	14	(6)
16 - 18	1	(0)	56	(23)
19 - 21	2	(1)	16	(6)
22 - 24	6	(2)	8	(3)
25 - 27	29	(12)	33	(13)
Not Permanently Employed	174	(71)	67	(27)
TOTALS	247	(100)	247	(100)

NOTES

<a> i.e. the number of months a respondent remained in the post after the 1st October 1979. Respondents who left the post for a different one with the same employer were counted as leaving their initial employment.

<b> i.e. the number of months a respondent had spent in this post on 31st December 1981.

Only 12 per cent of the 247 college respondents held a post on 1st October 1979 in which they stayed for the remaining period covered by the survey. Inversely, the same result emerges from the perspective of latest known occupations: by the 31st December 1981, only 13 per cent of all college respondents were in posts which they had occupied for twenty-five to twenty-seven months. This finding carries serious implications for the work of college careers services, since it appears

that in simple terms of supporting graduates' search for permanent work during the graduating year, the services' sphere of long-term influence is restricted to a very small proportion of their total output. This may point to the need for careers services to mediate enduring influences through other means than fairly immediate 'job-fixing'.

Of the forty-four respondents who had moved out of their first jobs, the majority did so within a year, particularly within the latter half of this year. Apart from those who had remained in the same job for the full period covered by the survey, the categories with the highest frequencies for length of time in latest known jobs were sixteen to eighteen months (fifty-six respondents) and four to six months (twenty-eight respondents). This clearly indicates that the two peak periods for entering latest known jobs were the late summer months of 1980 and 1981 - times at which the substantial numbers of PGCE graduates were taking up their full-time appointments.

This trend is also revealed in Table 5.16, which shows the raw numbers of respondents in each of the type of work categories at four different stages of their early careers: 1st October 1979 and the following three year endings, 1979,1980 and 1981. (It should be noted that this Table refers to type of work areas and not particular jobs, so that the movement of a respondent who had changed jobs but not type of work categories would not be dectectable through this Table. An analysis of individual mobility within type of work categories was carried out, but the number of cases in each of the outflow and inflow groupings were so small that few significant patterns were apparent.)

Table 5.16 Types of work entered by 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education at different stages after graduation

	1/10/79	31/12/79	31/12/80	31/12/81
	N	N	N	N
General Administration	13	13	16	18
Scientific RD & D	2	3	2	2
Environmental Planning	1	1	1	1
Scientific Analysis	1	1	2	3
Production Operation	0	0	0	1
Buying, Marketing, Selling	16	16	17	16
Services to Management	1	1	2	3
Financial work	5	5	9	7
Legal work	0	0	0	1
Creative/Entertainment	4	3	5	5
Information, Non-Sc. Research	4	5	6	7
Library & Archive work	2	1	1	2
Personnel	1	2	8	4
Health & Social Welfare	6	6	6	11
Teaching, Lecturing	1	3	57	65
Secretarial/Clerical	11	16	33	33
Others	5	6	5	1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS IN PERMANENT WORK	73	82	170	180

Table 5.16 shows that on the 1st October 1979, the total number of college respondents in permanent employment was seventy-three and by the end of the year it was still only eighty-two. A year later, however, following the main PGCE output, the number had doubled to 170, then rose only slightly again to 180 by the close of the following year. As could be expected, the numbers in 'Teaching & Lecturing', which were negligible in 1979, increased dramatically to fifty-seven in 1980 and continued to climb to sixty-five a year later. Thus, of all the occupational areas, teaching showed the largest growth, not only

between 1979 and 1980, but also between 1980 and 1981. Over the period December 1979 to December 1981, 'Health & Social Welfare' increased from six to eleven; 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' remained stable at around sixteen, 'General Administration' rose slightly from thirteen to eighteen and 'Secretarial/Clerical work', the second most prevalent inflow occupation, doubled from sixteen to thirty-three. Overall then, at the close of 1981 there were more graduates employed in the three main areas associated with lower status work than at any time since graduation. Consequently, once again the results confound hopes that the preponderance of graduates in non-teaching and lower staus work would decline as a result of occupational mobility.

PART TWO

By and large, Part One of this chapter has concentrated on describing and interpreting quantifiable indicators of graduates' early career patterns. The main focus has been placed upon trends in training, employment rates, types of work entered and levels of occupation achieved. Turning more directly to the 'subjective' items contained in the questionnaire, Part Two attempts to highlight college respondents' perceptions of their career experiences, particularly their levels of satisfaction with latest known jobs and career prospects. Maintaining a predominantly descriptive approach, it sets out to engage such questions as 'To what extent are college graduates satisfied with their employment circumstances?' and 'What is the nature of the relationship between occupational status and subjective accounts

of job satisfaction?'

Rather than asking the all-embracing and oversimplistic question, 'Are you satisfied with your job/career?', the questionnaire used a variety of closed and open-ended items, each of which addressed a particular but related component of the overall attitude. A closed item, for example, invited respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a number of attitudinal statements, one of which dealt with the extent to which they found their latest work intellectually satisfying.

Intellectual satisfaction in latest known job

Having posed the statement, 'My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be', respondents were requested to indicate their agreement or disagreement with it, according to a five point scale, which, for ease of presentation, was subsequently collapsed to three: Agree, Neutral and Disagree.

Although the proportion of college respondents agreeing with the statement (42 per cent) was roughly the same as those disagreeing with it (40 per cent), if, as shown in Table 5.17, the sample is broken down into a PGCE and a non-PGCE stream, it is evident that there was considerably more intellectual dissatisfaction among those who did not

complete a PGCE course than among those who did. Half of the non-PGCE stream, compared to one third of the teacher trainers, were intellectually dissatisfied with their latest known jobs (SS). Conversely, in contrast to 46 per cent of the PGCE stream, only 35 per cent of the non-PGCE stream could say they were satisfied with the intellectual demands of their work (SS).

Table 5.17 1979 non-BEd college respondents' intellectual satisfaction in latest job

"My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be."

	All respondents from former colleges of education	PGCE Stream	Non-PGCE Stream
	%	%	%
Agree	42	32	50
Neutral	18	22	15
Disagree	40	46	35
TOTALS (100%)	247	108	139

Tau C = .16 (SS)

This finding suggests that college graduates encountered difficulties in finding intellectually satisfying work outside of the teaching profession. Such an interpretation receives substantial support from Table 5.18, which displays the different levels of intellectual satisfaction in each of the main type of work categories entered by college graduates.

Table 5.18 1979 non-BEd college respondents: main type of work areas by intellectual satisfaction in latest known job

"My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be."

	Teaching	Clerical	Gen. Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health & Soc. Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	25	73	61	50	18
Neutral	18	12	6	19	18
Disagree	57	15	33	31	64
TOTALS (100%)	65	33	18	16	11

Cramer's V = .29 (SS)

In comparison to only 25 per cent of teachers, 73 per cent of clerical workers (SS), 61 per cent of general administrators (SS) and 50 per cent in 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' were disappointed by the lack of intellectual stimulation in their work. Similarly, while 57 per cent of teachers were able to disagree with the statement, thereby indicating their satisfaction with the levels of intellect demanded in their jobs, only 15 per cent of clerical workers (SS), 33 per cent of general administrators and 31 per cent in 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' could do likewise. Consequently, in comparison to teaching, the three main types of non-teaching work entered by college graduates were commonly associated with an increased frequency and intensity of intellectual frustration and underemployment.

An additional finding of some interest is that, although only eleven respondents were to be found in 'Health & Social Welfare' at the end of 1981, their levels of intellectual satisfaction in this area of

work were demonstrably congruent with that of teaching respondents. Although not shown in the Table, because of the small numbers involved, another type of work category with a high rate of intellectual satisfaction was 'Financial work', where all seven employees were clearly contented with the high degree of intellectual demands in their work.

Table 5.19 demonstrates the strength of the correspondence between occupational status, as described in Part One, and levels of intellectual satisfaction in latest known jobs (Tau b = .41; SS). Of those in low status jobs, while 76 per cent were intellectually dissatisfied with their work, only 7 per cent were satisfied. Alternatively, of those in graduate status jobs, only 22 per cent were disappointed with the intellectual requirements of their work, while 60 per cent expressed satisfaction.

Consequently, given the high statistical significance of this result, graduates in high status occupations were more likely to experience intellectual satisfaction in their work than graduates in low or medium status occupations, who were correspondingly more likely to have encontered intellectual dissatisfaction and frustration. Further analyses revealed that a similar correspondence did not exist between latest known salaries and levels of intellectual satisfaction.

Table 5.19 1979 non-BEd college respondents: occupational status by intellectual satisfaction with latest job

"My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be."

	Low	Medium	Graduate
	%	%	%
Agree	76	61	22
Neutral	18	10	18
Disagree	6	29	60
TOTALS (100%)	17	67	96

Tau b = .41 (SS)

When examining the nature of the intellectual satisfaction and dissatisfaction experienced by graduates, it is noticeable that the dissatisfied rather than the satisfied made greater use of the open-ended items to elaborate on their problems. Of the many teachers who disagreed with the statement, only five proceeded to offer such descriptions of their satisfaction as, "teaching music gave me an opportunity to develop my interest in this area", "teaching makes heavy mental demands" and "teachers need to keep learning all the time". By way of illustrating their contentment with the mental demands of their jobs, a small number of respondents in other occupations used such phrases as "demanding", "challenging", "need a lively mind", "need to be independent and take initiatives", and "need a knowledge of all the company's operations". Reminiscent of an earlier quotation from a trainee solicitor, (see 'Other training' section), accountancy was one occupation which was invariably associated with high levels of intellectual capabilities and stamina. Two extracts will suffice to recount the mental pressures faced in this type of work and training:

(Q.21) One has to know that chartered accountancy is the career for them. One cannot just drift into accountancy because there seems nothing better to do. It is a career which should be thoroughly examined - perhaps even as far as taking an intermediate course to prepare oneself. Student accountants are told that they will have no social life as compared with college or universtity. It is true - the pressure of studying and exams far outweighs previous experience at college or university.

(Q.21) People must also realise the amount of work involved in obtaining a professional qualification. To give some idea of the standards, the average pass rate for the Chartered Accountants professional exams is currently 20 per cent and the majority of students are now graduates. If you are to qualify you must be prepared to commit yourself totally to studying for three years.

In marked contrast to those who found satisfaction in meeting considerable mental demands, one or two respondents intimated that they found some intellectual satisfaction in, what many would consider were, routine menial jobs:

(Q.21) The work is interesting and varied and, at the moment, relatively secure. However, when the 'fixed penalty' system is introduced for many minor traffic offences, this will reduce the work of a magistrate's court considerably. Anyone wishing to make a career in this field, would be advised to take a degree in law, and then, within the framework of an office, go on to become a barrister or solicitor. However, even without this, it is possible to qualify as a court clerk, by studying for the relevant diploma, also while working in an office. I could do this if I wish, but have declined to do so. I'm quite happy to do an interesting job which ends at 5pm with no strains and leaving my evenings free.

This view, however, was rare; most of those in fairly routine jobs expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the underemployment associated with the lack of intellectual stimulation at work.

Of those who both assented to the statement and offered some open-ended indications of their reasons for feeling intellectually

deprived at work, only three were teachers. Displaying tendencies to equate 'intellectual' with 'academic' development, two of these teachers warned against expectations of the profession as a facilitator of personal intellectual growth:

> (Q.21) Don't look upon teaching as an extension to your own intellectual development. It could be many years before you come anywhere near the dizzy heights of degree work.
>
> (Q.21) One should be more interested in the teaching of one's subject particularly at lower levels than in the actual subject area itself. It can be very difficult for example to adjust oneself to the demands of children who are musically semi-illiterate after one has achieved a high standard at undergraduate level.

Although an educational social worker complained that his work contained "no academic content or satisfaction", the majority of the open-ended comments that described aspects of intellectual underemployment were volunteered by respondents in clerical and general administration jobs. They frequently perceived their work to be "tedious", "boring", "unstimulating", "mundane", "repetitive", "not requiring educated people with minds of their own", "minimum intelligence is required" and "'O' level ability is not even required". Several more lengthy quotations, clearly recording the mentally demeaning work being experienced by some respondents, have already been included in earlier parts of this chapter. To close this section, a further four extracts can be taken as indicative of the underemployment experienced by many college graduates who did not enter the teaching profession:

> (Q.21, secretary in manufacturing industry) Perhaps the most important point to make about secretarial work is that even in the current employment situation there are still many secretarial vacancies available providing you are not

too restricted regarding the area in which you are prepared to work. However, allowing for the odd exceptions where secretarial work might be combined with another area of employment, this area of employment rarely justifies the need for degree level education and so quickly becomes boring and routine. Having chosen this area it is difficult to risk leaving it to move into a totally different and more intellectually demanding field.

(Q.21, clerical worker) There is no definite system of promotion, which means you could be promoted at any time or alternatively wait a lifetime for promotion. Most of the work tends to be routine and is not very stimulating unless you are in a higher position, where you are given responsibility to take decisions.

(Q.21, executive officer) The Civil Service offers a relatively stable, secure work environment. It does not offer good promotional prospects and offers very little chance of creative thinking. Do not become a civil servant unless you are prepared to fall neatly into the niche which is carved for you.

(Q.21, assistant houseparent) I have found that many young girls apply for child-care without any understanding of the nature of the work. I was the most qualified of the staff. It is very easy to let your brain lie dormant as it is often unstimulated. This will depend largely on the organization and the home which you choose to work for. It is my opinion that [my previous employers] offered the educated person more in the way of job satisfaction by understanding the needs of children. The job I am at present in offers no stimulation at all. I find I am largely a domestic and am not given time to discuss any of the children's behaviour or how this could be modified.

Satisfaction with currency of degree

As a broad measure of the extent of satisfaction with the employment currency of their degrees, graduates were asked to respond to the statement, 'Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider'. As Table 5.20 shows, exactly half of all college respondents endorsed the statement, just over a quarter rejected it and just under a quarter remained neutral.

Table 5.20 1979 non-BEd college respondents: satisfaction with currency of degree

"Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider."

	All respondents from former colleges of education	PGCE Stream	Non-PGCE Stream
	%	%	%
Agree	50	62	40
Neutral	22	18	26
Disagree	28	20	34
TOTALS (100%)	247	108	139

Tau C = .22 (SS)

Nevertheless, as with many of the items discussed earlier, these overall proportions were not uniformly distributed between the two main streams of college graduates. Whereas, only one in five of

the PGCE stream were dissatisfied with the currency of their degrees, as many as one in three of the non-PGCE stream were (SS). Conversely, in contrast to 62 per cent of the PGCE stream, only 40 per cent of the non-PGCE stream expressed satisfaction with the currency of their degree (SS) - the majority were either neutral or in disagreement with the statement.

Corroborating this interpretation, Table 5.21 demonstrates that, while the vast majority of teachers were content with the employability range of their degrees - only 5 per cent of them disagreed with the statement - with higher proportions in both the neutral and disagree categories, employees in the other main type of work areas were considerably less satisfied. In addition, therefore, to the problems of finding non-teaching work of graduate status, which offered some scope for intellectual stimulation, a substantial proportion of college graduates were also disenchanted by the currency value of their degrees.

Table 5.21 1979 non-BEd college respondents: main type of work areas by satisfaction with currency of degree

"Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider."

	Teaching	Clerical	Gen.Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health & Social Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	78	36	39	56	46
Neutral	17	27	33	25	27
Disagree	5	37	28	19	27
TOTALS (100%)	65	33	18	16	11

A very similar interpretation can be placed on the responses to the statement, 'On reflection, I now think my future job prospects would have been as good without a degree'. Representing a further attempt to guage respondents' evaluations of the employment currency of their degrees, Table 5.22 demonstrates that the overall majority (72 per cent) disagreed with this statement.

Table 5.22 1979 non-BEd college respondents: satisfaction with degree as enhancement of job prospects beyond 'A' level currency

"On reflection I now think my future job prospects would have been as good without a degree."

	All respondents from former colleges of education	PGCE Stream	Non-PGCE Stream
	%	%	%
Agree	22	7	33
Neutral	6	2	10
Disagree	72	91	57
TOTALS (100%)	247	108	139

Tau C = .33 (SS)

However, the Table also shows that the 22 per cent who endorsed the statement were mainly those respondents who had not taken a PGCE course. One in three of such respondents considered that their future job prospects would have been as good without a degree; the corresponding proportion for the PGCE stream was 7 per cent (SS).

Following a similar pattern to the earlier statements, while teaching respondents were almost unanimous in their rejection of attributing such a low currency value to their degrees, respondents in other areas of employment, notably in clerical and general administration work (SS), were much more reluctant to do likewise (see Table 5.23).

Table 5.23 1979 non-BEd college respondents: main type of work areas by satisfaction with degree as enhancement of job prospects beyond 'A' level currency

"On reflection, I now think my future job prospects would have been as good without a degree."

	Teaching	Clerical	Gen.Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health/Social Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	2	42	33	13	9
Neutral	3	9	6	31	27
Disagree	95	49	61	56	64
TOTALS (100%)	65	33	18	16	11

It may also be noted that, although the attitudes to both statements on degree currency were strongly correlated with attitudes to intellectual satisfaction and occupational status, there was no such clear correspondence between attitudes to degree currency and latest known salary or employment circumstances. For example, those who were disappointed by their degree currency were likely to be intellectually dissatisfied at work, in low or medium status jobs, but not necessarily more likely to be low paid or unemployed.

A further statement which has some bearing on the relative currency value of degrees, 'I think I would have obtained a better job if I had gone to university', did not produce the differential response common to other attitude statements. 56 per cent of all college respondents, with equal proportions from PGCE and non-PGCE streams, disagreed with the view that they would have improved their career prospects if they had attended a university rather than a college (see Tables 5.24 and 5.25).

Table 5.24 1979 non-BEd college respondents: hindsight preference for university degree currency

"I think I would have obtained a better job if I had gone to university."

	All respondents from former colleges of education	PGCE stream	Non-PGCE stream
	%	%	%
Agree	18	15	20
Neutral	26	30	22
Disagree	56	55	58
TOTALS (100%)	247	108	139

Tau C = :0 (NS)

Table 5.25 1979 non-BEd college respondents: main type of work areas by hindsight preference for university degree currency

"I think I would have obtained a better job if I had gone to university."

	Teaching	Clerical	Gen.Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health/Social Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	12	24	22	13	9
Neutral	32	18	6	31	27
Disagree	56	58	72	56	64
TOTALS (100%)	65	33	18	16	11

Of course, follow-up interviews would be necessary to ascertain their reasons for disagreeing with the statement: were they based on the belief that university graduates as a whole had no additional advantages in the search for employment or were their perceptions of their own abilities such as to make it improbable that they as individuals would not have received careers enhancement by attending a university? Approximately one fifth of all respondents felt that a university degree would have extended their job prospects and just over a quarter gave a neutral response. This comparatively high proportion of neutral responses may reflect the fact that some graduates attended PGCE university courses and others insisted that the colleges they attended were actually universities.

In conjunction with the answers to the above attitude statements, the contents of the open-ended responses were analysed for their relevance to levels of satisfaction with the currency of college degrees. For this purpose, attention has been focused on comments

relating to the level and range of employment prospects permitted by their degrees, but not those relating to the relevance of degree courses to occupational requirements since these will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. As with intellectual satisfaction in the previous section, the opinions of those who were dissatisfied with the currency of their degrees were more frequently and forcefully expressed than those who appeared to be satisfied with their degree currency.

Turning first of all to those who commented on elements of satisfaction with degree currency, it was clear that most of the teachers took it to be almost self-evident that they were satisfied with the employment benefits associated with their degrees, simply because their degrees had gained them entry to a popular degree-requiring profession. Four or five teachers went on to state their conviction that a BA degree followed by a PGCE possessed greater currency than a BEd degree. Thirty-two non-teaching respondents offered comments, which, in one way or another, acknowledged that they had obtained employment as a result of possessing a degree. The following short extracts illustrate the kind of responses volunteered by these thirty-two:

> (Q.20i, residential social worker) When I obtained my present post I was told that being a graduate got me the job, as they felt that 'I had something to offer'.

> (Q.20i, computer programmer) [My degree courses] had no relevance at all to my present job. However I had no idea that I would be doing this job when I started college. However I would not have been able to get my job unless I'd had a degree.

> (Q.20i, housewife who resigned as Executive Officer) I could not have got into the Civil Service at Executive

> Officer level without my degree, as non-graduates are seldom offered even Clerical Officer posts in the Inland Revenue in the present climate of unemployment.
>
> (Q.20i, clerical Officer) I think that having a degree helped me obtain employment, but simply because of the employment situation in that employers were demanding higher qualifications than they would have done, say five years ago.

Very rarely, however, did respondents suggest that they were content with the currency of their degrees on the grounds that it provided a range of possible employment options. The following response was highly exceptional:

> (Q.20i, assistant retail manager) Degree course followed was a General Ordinary course, therefore allowing me to study four different subjects - giving great variety and also knowledge to the areas covered. The variation and broad span of knowledge enabled me to consider a vast range of careers and also helped considerably in coping with work that involves constant variation and instant decision making. However the course followed being General rules out jobs requiring specialist knowledge.

In moving on to consider comments from respondents who had reservations about the currency value of their degrees, it was clearly evident that very few teachers fell into this category. A handful of teachers believed that their career prospects could have been improved by taking an Honours degree and one felt that the lack of opportunity to teach his subject at 'O' and 'A' level standard could be due to the perceived status of his degree. Other than these, however, in the absence of open-ended comments to the contrary, it may be concluded that most teachers were content with the currency value of their degrees.

With respect to non-teaching graduates, for every respondent who commented that employment had been obtained as a result of possessing a degree, there was another respondent who stated that their entry into employment had not required a degree. Moreover, respondents who volunteered open-ended statements which indicated dissatisfaction with degree currency were more likely to comment upon its general currency than those who were correspondingly satisfied.

Non-teaching respondents provided numerous comments to illustrate how the limited currency value of their degrees had led to the acceptance of non-graduate entry jobs: "didn't need a degree for this job", "'O' levels not even needed", "my eighteen year old friends with just 'A' levels are doing better than me in this line of work" and so on. Among these, even respondents in fairly reasonable medium status jobs appeared disillusioned by the fact that they could have entered their employment with qualifications of a lower standard.

> (Q.20i, Assistant development chemist) The courses I took [Biology and Rural Science] gave me no real grounding in any particular aspect of either subject, and I soon found out that my degree was regarded as an 'educationalist's experiment' by prospective employers....(Q.21) I don't feel capable of answering this as I am not employed as a graduate, and those that are, are finding it difficult due to increased competition, and the fact that many people now accept a position because it is a job which they may not be offered elsewhere.

> (Q.20i, Cartographic draughtswoman) My degree course has so far done very little to help me obtain or prepare for work. I could have entered my present job at the age of sixteen with four 'O' levels. It would have possibly been more useful had my degree course had been an honours course in three years - as are most degrees at university.

Others also registered their frustration that their degree had not allowed them to compete with university graduates. One of the extracts from an unemployed graduate quoted earlier commented to this effect, as did the following respondent:

> (Q.20i, Clerk) All the applications I made were to people who wanted a graduate. However, I would have had a better chance if I'd got a better class of degree or if it was a University degree.

A further type of comment related to graduates' perceptions and experiences of the continuing fall in the currency value and status of a degree. An earlier quotation (see 'Unemployment' section) contained the observation that degrees seemed to be losing much of the prestige value they once possessed. Two more respondents made a similar point:

> (Q.20i; Clerical officer in civil service) The mere fact that I have a degree helps - though the job I now have I could have qualified for on my 'O' level passes alone!! I found out quite early on that the fact you have a degree no longer means you walk into a top job!! - more's the pity!

> (Q.20i, Quality control assistant) [My degree courses] have not, as yet, been useful in obtaining employment. A degree is useful in indicating to a prospective employer a certain level of general ability, although in the current employment situation most employers seem to prefer applicants with lower or no qualifications. I studied for a degree for personal satisfaction only, rather than to enter a particular career, although I would have thought that having a degree would carry more weight with employers than it appears to at the moment.

The down-grading of the employment currency of degrees has undoubtedly resulted in the growing phenomena of 'overqualified' graduates. Once again, examples of this have been presented earlier, but a further extract may serve to highlight some of the difficulties faced by several graduates:

> (Q.201, Clerical officer in civil service) I found that a lot of employers once they see you have a degree expect you to be ambitious which I am not. I only wanted a job which was steady, ample money and not too demanding and I had a job convincing employers that I would be content with that sort of job. They expected that I would get bored and move off quickly. They also pointed out that the salary they would offer would not be one in line with my qualifications. In the end I started to play down my degree and for the clerical assistant post I even left it off the application form thinking that they would give me an interview as a courtesy to someone who could be bothered to apply for such a job with a degree, but not really want me (one employer told me this was why I had got an interview) - can be a foot in the door though. In the end I worked as a barmaid where they didn't ask about any qualifications and I think this helped get my present job as it showed I was willing to work at anything.

Overall then, the attitude statements showed that, while the majority of teachers were satisfied with the currency value of their degrees, a significant proportion of graduates working in other occupations were not. Furthermore, the open-ended comments tended to support this interpretation and revealed that their reasons for feeling discontented with their degree currency included working in jobs which required only 'O' or 'A' level qualifications, competing with graduates who possessed superior types of degrees, confronting a labour market in which the prestige value of degrees was falling and encountering employers who frequently considered graduates to be overqualified and probably overambitious.

Attitudes to latest known jobs and career development

A separate item in the questionnaire (Q.13) invited respondents to select one statement from seven which best matched their feelings about the extent to which their latest job was compatible with their long term career aspirations. Without taking too much for granted, the replies can be interpreted as indications of the levels of commitment, and perhaps, by inference, the levels of satisfaction in a long term perspective, attached to the career opportunities afforded by their latest jobs. However, since commitment to a career cannot always be taken to imply satisfaction with the current stage of that career, a degree of caution is warranted when drawing such inferences.

Table 5.26 shows that just over a quarter of all college respondents were unable to answer the question because, for one reason or another, they were not in full time permanent employment at the time of completing the questionnaire. Just under a quarter saw their career developing with their current employing organization and the same proportion expected their career to progress to a similar job but with a different employer. Adding these latter two groups together, 46 per cent of college respondents appeared to be committed to a career with either their latest known employer or occupation. On the other hand, just over a quarter of respondents, for a variety of reasons, did not envisage their latest known employers or jobs as satisfactory long term career possibilities. Consequently, taking those not in employment into consideration, in contrast to the 46 per cent who were fairly committed to a career, 54 per cent were either not employed or uncommitted to their latest known line of work.

Table 5.26 1979 non-BEd college respondents: attitudes to latest known jobs and career development

	All	PGCE Stream	Non-PGCE Stream
	%	%	%
Long term career developing with this organization (1)	23	23	23
Stay about 3 years, then move to same job but different employer (2)	23	27	21
Stay 3 years then move to different kind of job (3)	6	4	7
Doing job for experience until something better turns up (4)	12	9	14
Dislike this job and trying to find another one (5)	5	4	5
Dislike this job but will stay here since no others available (6)	4	2	5
Not applicable because not in full-time employment (7)	27	31	25
TOTALS (100%)	247	108	139

Cramer's V = .17 (NS)

Table 5.26 also shows that, while each of the two main streams had equal proportions of respondents who were committed to their employing organizations (23 per cent), a slightly higher share of the PGCE stream than the non-PGCE stream were committed to their occupations - 27 per cent for the former, 21 per cent for the latter. Correspondingly, only 19 per cent of the PGCE's, compared to 31 per

cent of non-PGCE's, were uncommitted to either employer or occupation (SS).

Greater differences between teachers and non-teachers are more apparent in Table 5.27, which compares the answers to this question according to the respondents' type of work category.

Table 5.27 1979 non-BEd college respondents: attitudes to latest known jobs and career development in each of the main type of work areas

Response Categories (as in Table 5.26)	Teaching	Clerical	General Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health & Social Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%
(1)	34	18	39	37	55
(2)	46	15	28	13	18
(3)	6	9	5	25	18
(4)	9	31	17	19	0
(5)	3	12	6	6	0
(6)	2	15	5	0	9
TOTALS (100%)	65	33	18	16	11

Of those whose latest known occupation was teaching, 80 per cent saw their future career development in the context of their employer or occupation. In sharp contrast, of those employed as clerical workers, the second most frequently entered type of work area, the proportion with either type of career commitment was 33 per cent (SS). Two thirds, therefore, were not able to perceive any career development arising from the clerical jobs they performed. Respondents in 'General

Administration' and 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' had roughly the same proportions who were optimistic of a career with their employing organizations as teachers, but had considerably smaller percentages of respondents who were inclided to consider their actual occupations as long term career prospects. As a result, the three main non-teaching occupational areas had correspondingly higher percentages registering their dissatisfaction with the lack of career prospects in their jobs. The only slight exceptions to this trend were the 'Health & Social Welfare' workers, who demonstrated a particularly strong attachment to their employing institutions. Overall though, the results substantiate the familiar pattern: outside of teaching, significant numbers of college graduates faced real difficulties in finding occupations and employers in which they could invest a commitment to long term career development. It may be added that the responses indicating commitment to an employer or occupation were frequently associated with high occupational status, positive attitudes to intellectual demands at work and satisfaction with the currency value of their degrees.

Respondents' accounts of their latest jobs

For the final section of this chapter, the open-ended comments have been used to describe, and in many cases recapitulate upon, respondents' accounts of their experiences in their latest known employment. Although limitations on space dictate that only the briefest of outlines is possible, it is hoped, nevertheless, that sufficicent is presented to illuminate the general pattern of experiences encountered by graduates in the main type of work areas entered.

Several respondents clearly felt that teaching was a rewarding and enjoyable occupation:

> (Q.21) ....as a rewarding, satisfying career it is second to none.

Many stressed that the work involved made very heavy demands on their time and energies:

> (Q.21)....Teaching is not the job for those who like to rest on their laurels. It is very demanding and it often goes without rewards. There is also a great amount of administrative work that students are not aware of.

> (Q.21)....The first year is hell but it's much better in the second year. Extremely tiring - days when you feel like chucking it all in but it does have rewards - children can be very lovely as well as being little horrors.....Rigidity and formality of school can be irritating. Holidays a perk but you do need them. Stress is a big factor..

Expressing similar points, many respondents had found that very little spare time was left and, as a result, they often considered that

teaching should not be entered simply because there was nothing else to do:

> (Q.21) Make sure that you know that teaching is what you want to do. It is unfair to many people if you are not going to give your best. Teaching is not an easy option. It can be very hard work (physical and mental) and involves more 'home' work than you think - preparation, displaying, marking, meetings and further training.

> (Q.21) Never consider teaching as an easy option ie. due to the long holidays etc. Be prepared to put in a great deal of work in your spare time.

Rather than opting for the profession for such negative reasons, graduate teachers frequently advised that a real sense of vocation, dedication and commitment was essential:

> (Q.21) Only go into teaching if it is something you really want to do. A strong, resilient character is essential.

> (Q.21) Be ready to give up an exciting social life and spend many nights marking or preparing lessons!! Only go into teaching if you are strong-willed and able to put in a certain amount of dedication....By the way, I do enjoy my job but I am now just beginning to discover the pitfalls!

Several urged prospective teachers to take a general degree, preferably an Honours degree, followed by a PGCE:

> (Q.21) Study for an Honours degree if at all possible - it makes a big difference to your wage packet.

> (Q.21) Get as highly qualified as possible - do a degree, not a teaching qualification, then do a PGCE.

Finally, several teaching respondents alluded to the current depressed state of education in this country and perceived it to be undermining their motivation and enthusiasm for the job:

> (Q.21) Beware of the severe effect of education cuts

> and the unemployment situation. Pupils and staff are suffering from lack of morale - pupils' frustrations at home and job-wise are often aired in the classroom. Education cuts and redemployment and compulsory redundancy are leading to a sense of disillusionment. Beware of the present job situation - teachers are far too used to a feeling of total security in their job and this is no longer true.

Overall though, inspite of this climate and the pressures of work, teaching emerges as an exacting but satisfying occupation for the many college graduates who entered it.

The same cannot be said for the other main type of work areas entered by college graduates. In contrast to the teachers, the vast majority of clerical workers were almost invariably frustrated by the undemanding and monotonous nature of their work. Of the thirty-three respondents working in a clerical capacity, only one - the clerk in a Magistrate's office, cited earlier - stated that she found her work interesting, though even she conceded that she had no aspirations to seek any more demanding tasks. As several earlier quotations have repeatedly shown, secretaries frequently complained that their work was undervalued, boring, mundane, unworthy of degree level education, soul-destroying and lacking in opportunities for genuine promotions. Civil servant clerical workers were particularly disheartened by the extent of underemployment in their employing organizations. Some protested about the 'dead hand of bureaucracy' and the 'squashing of initiatives'. One respondent wanted to alert present graduates to the fact that even the clerical duties in the fairly glamorous work environments of the theatre and the media are often repetitive and routine:

> (Q.21, Secretary in theatre) ..Theatre administration

> can be just as tedious as any other job; there's a lot of routine work and it helps if you're a shorthand/typist like me.....Production secretaries work very long hours and the pay is bad, but be careful of working for love, it leaves you open to exploitation.

Similar problems were reported by employees in 'General Administration', though of the eighteen respondents in this category, there were proportionally fewer expressions of job dissatisfaction and, on the whole, they tended to be less severe. Moreover, two respondents were clearly appreciative of the challenges entailed in their type of administrative work:

> (Q.21, Staff Consultant) ...Anyone entering the employment agency field at this moment will inevitably find it frustrating to say the least. It is however a rewarding and challenging area always presenting new problems and situations.

> (Q.11, Accounts executive) This job is exactly what, if I had known it existed, I would have chosen to do as it allows me to unite my love of sport with a desire to be with people in an organizational capacity....(Q.21) You really need to enjoy working with people to do the job I am involved with at the moment. You need to be able to contend with a certain amount of rudeness and inefficiency from the clients. Organization and the ability to take the initiative are essential. ....I should also say that I know that I was and am incredibly lucky to have found a job that I love so much in such a way.....I would still like to go into teaching at some stage although I am enjoying my present career too much at the moment to contemplate renouncing it. The experience that I now have of many different companies and business will be very useful whatever I choose to do in the future.

This type of work area also included a number of administrative and general managerial personnel in sports and leisure centres, though these respondents were not forthcoming in the open-ended comments and hence gave little indication of whether or not they were satisfied with their jobs. One warned graduates contemplating this area of work to consider carefully the 'unpleasant side of man management' and the

'unsociable hours' involved in the work.

As depicted in earlier quotations, more decidedly dissatisfied were general office administrators such as the administrative assistant in a local health authority who found her work very tedious and a faculty assistant who was frustrated by the lack of promotion prospects. Similarly, administrative assistants in a Youth Opportunities Scheme and a health centre both recorded low opinions of the status and value of their work. In expressing disenchantment with his work situation, a trainee transport administrator drew attention to the difficulties of finding a sympathetic ear to listen to his grievances:

> (Q.21) .....An advertised course of training in the field of bus operations management has in reality turned out to be a clerical merry-go round rotating every three months around various administrative departments. All graduates should ascertain from employers the practical dividends from so-called 'professional' examinations; personally my studies for the 'Chartered Institute of Transport' have not been acknowledged in any real sense by [my employers] despite having won a prize for the best overall performance in the second year examinations this summer. Finally I would warn all graduates to be prepared to cope with a dose of hyper-boredom if they become employed by any large organization. My deep feelings of discontent are not appreciated by my 'development' or 'career' adviser within [the organization] despite the fact that she is a relatively recent graduate herself; so graduates should not be surprised if they find that people who they would naturally feel would be aware of their plight, in reality turn a deaf ear, and, instead of assisting, merely inform you of 'how lucky you are to have a job'. What was it that Disraeli said about getting to the top of the greasy pole?

Overall, although 'general administrators' workers did not display the almost unanimous disppointment expressed by clerical workers, they provided more open-ended indications of dissatisfaction than satisfaction, notwithstanding the enthusiastic extracts offered

earlier.

The general impression gained from the open-ended comments from employees in the 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' category resembles that gained from 'general administration' workers, namely, a few respondents expressing positive attitudes to their work but a slightly greater number suggesting they were less than happy. An assistant retail manager, quoted earlier, saw his work as 'enjoyable and rewarding', as did the following sales representative:

> (Q.21) The job is very demanding and competitive. It requires great self-motivation and determination and is not a job for people who do not enjoy pressure. It is very important to choose a company who are prepared to train you. It is only through being a competent salesman that you can hope to move into management. It is a popular misconception that there is complete freedom in selling. It is a very disciplined profession. However, there are numerous rewards and you can see the results of your efforts.

From the opposite perspective, there were more retail workers whose jobs did not bring these type of rewards. Disillusioned by the lack of intellectual stimulation in their work, they often complained that their degrees were neither required by, nor relevant to, their latest jobs. For example, one respondent, an assistant manager in a garden centre, was aggrieved by the lack of opportunities in his job:

> (Q.21) Listen very carefully at the interview for aspects which may be glossed over very quickly. Take particular notice of such words as 'we would expect', 'possibly in the future', 'should the need arise' and 'circumstances permitting'. In my experience these words provide bait for the job but hide unfulfilled promises.....Don't believe everything they tell you.

For a further example, a deputy manageress in a large chain store experienced the many drawbacks of her work with little reward to

compensate for them:

> (Q.21) Be prepared to give a lot more than will be given to you ie. working the odd extra couple of hours here and there 'for the love of the job.' And also be prepared for the extremely long hours - including Saturday morning. I think that for those who are willing to be mobile (ie. move every twelve months) life can be extremely lonely.

As could be predicted from the responses to the attitudinal statements, open-ended comments provided by workers in the 'Health & Social Welfare' category showed a tendency to a similar degree of job satisfaction as that displayed by teachers. There were a number of complaints - lack of academic involvement and career structure - but most of the respondents in this category seemed to be enjoying their work, however tiring and demanding. The following two respondents illustrate this experience:

> (Q.21, Residential social worker) The work of a residential social worker is challenging, interesting and vocational. People from many different backgrounds and with widely differing life experiences can find satisfaction and stimulation within the work, each is employed largely on character rather than qualifications. The work tends to be time-consuming and presents unsociable hours, which can lead to various problems outside the work. I would suggest that anyone seeking to find this kind of employment firstly considers at what stage their own personal and emotional development has reached because the children who come into care are increasingly difficult and demanding, and require a relatively stable and mature personality to work with them. Also try to assess how much you really are prepared to work among angry, confused, sometimes maladjusted teenagers and what you can hope to offer them in terms of compensation. If all this hasn't put you off then get stuck in because it's a great job.

> (Q.21, Policeman) I would tell [prospective entrants to this career] that it is a very rewarding job and that popular opinion of what the job is like, is very different from the one they would find themselves in. The hardest part of the job is training but this is designed to weed out the half-hearted applicants. In my opinion no one should drop out of the job at this time as you learn to be a policeman on the streets not in the training school.

The problem with this category of work appears not to be the underemployment characteristic of the other three non-teaching areas of work predominantly entered by college graduates, but the shortage of vacancies in a very popular range of occupations.

Summary

Since detailed summaries of the findings presented above are provided in Chapter Seven these need not be duplicated here. At this point in the thesis, suffice it to say that this chapter has offered an interpretation of the main descriptive results to emerge from the 'Beyond Graduation' survey into the early careers of the 1979 diversified degree graduates from colleges of higher education. Thus far, no attempt has been made to relate graduates' career patterns to biographical, and other explanatory, variables which may have imparted considerable influences on their career experiences and attitudes. This task is undertaken in the following chapter.