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Improving Learning

Australian Council *for* Educational Research

Embedding employability in the Curriculum – Strategies to improve outcomes for university graduates

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Future Work Skills 2020

While all six drivers are important in shaping the landscape in which each skill emerges, the color-coding and placement here indicate which drivers have particular relevance to the development of each of the skills.
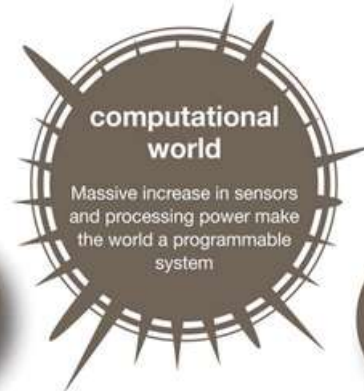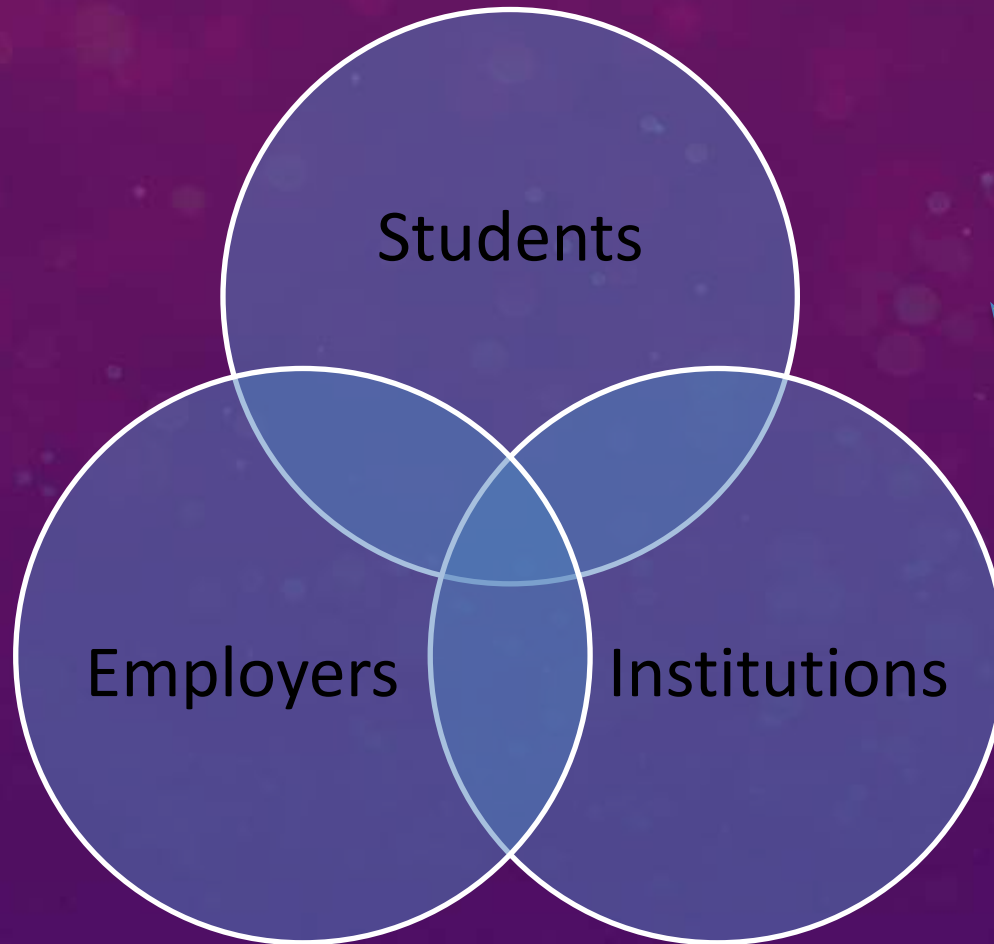
KEY

Drivers—disruptive shifts that will reshape the workforce landscape

Key skill needed in the future workforce

extreme longevity
Increasing global lifespans change the nature of careers and learning

computational world
Massive increase in sensors and processing power make the world a programmable system

superstructed organizations
Social technologies drive new forms of production and value creation

Trans-disciplinarity

Design Mindset

Virtual Collaboration

Sense-Making

New Media Literacy

Cross Cultural Competency

Social Intelligence

Cognitive Load Management

Novel and Adaptive Thinking

rise of smart machines and systems
Workplace robotics nudge human workers out of rote, repetitive tasks

Computational Thinking

new media ecology
New communication tools require new media literacies beyond text

globally-connected world
Increased global interconnectivity puts diversity and adaptability at the center of organizational operations

INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE

http://www.iftf.org/futureworkskills/

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Who is responsible for employability?
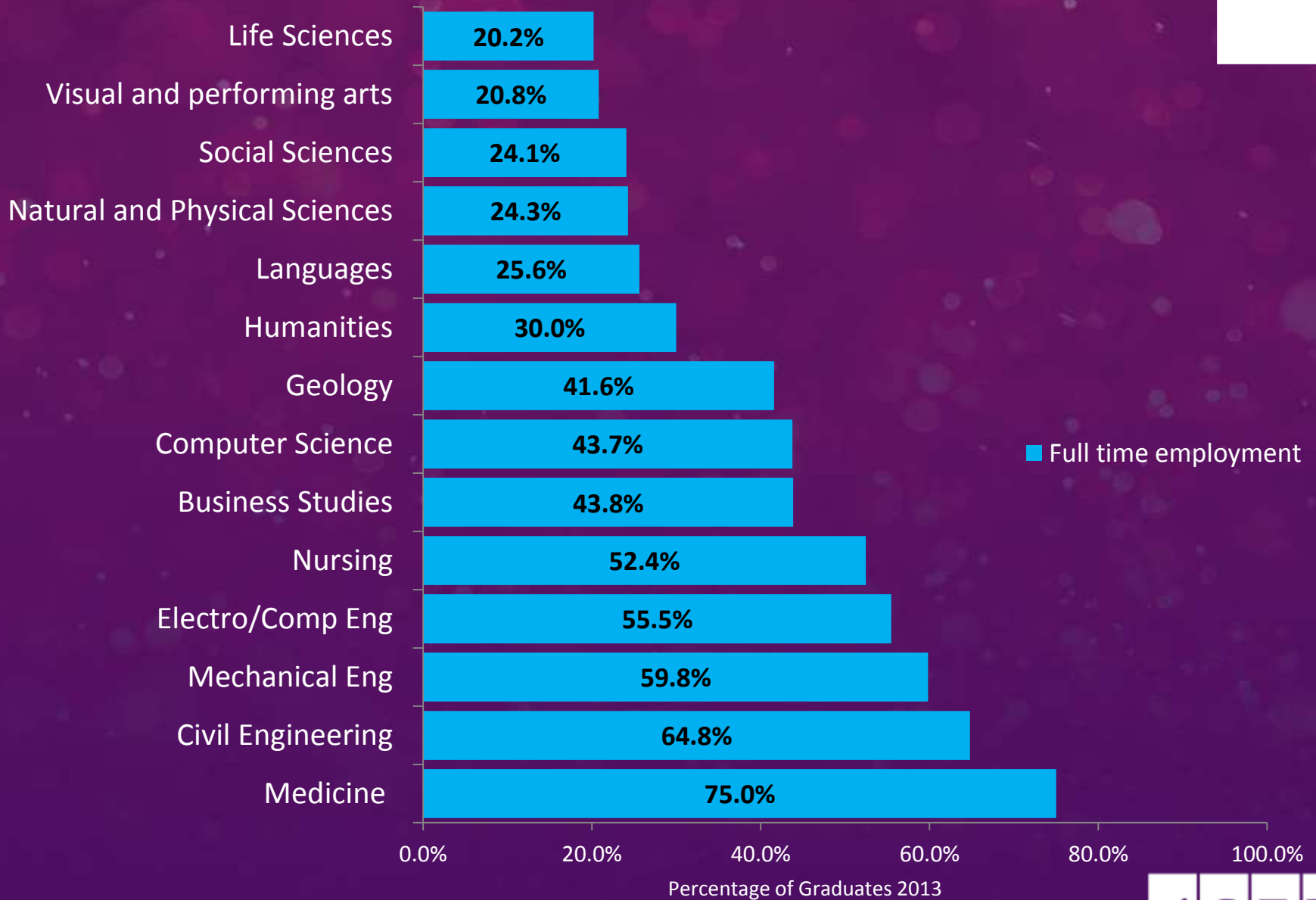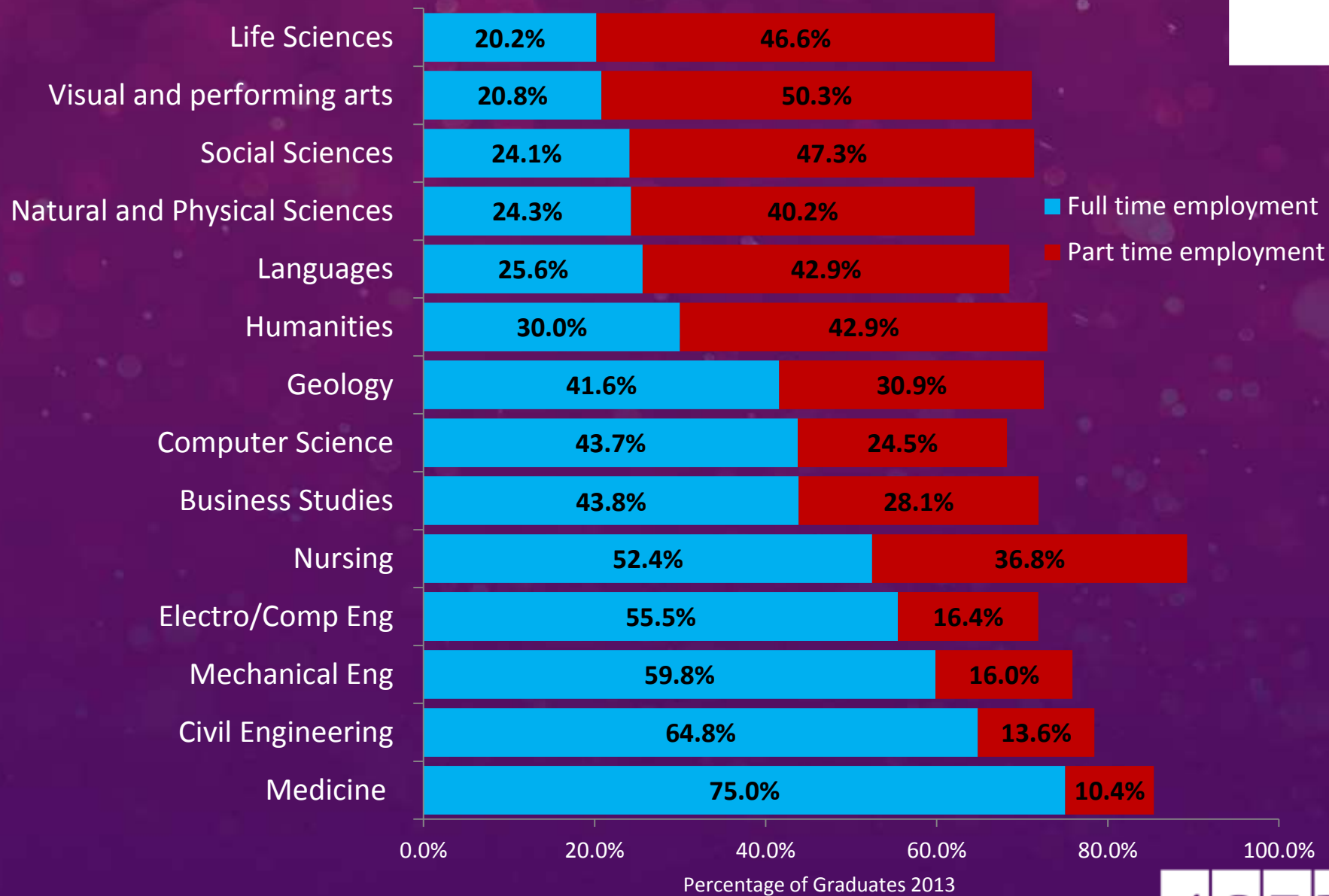

Students

Employers

Institutions

Senior academic

"The great bulk of university academics, outside of … fields with very clear intended career outcomes, know nothing at all about what graduate jobs exist in their fields of study … nor about how to find those jobs.
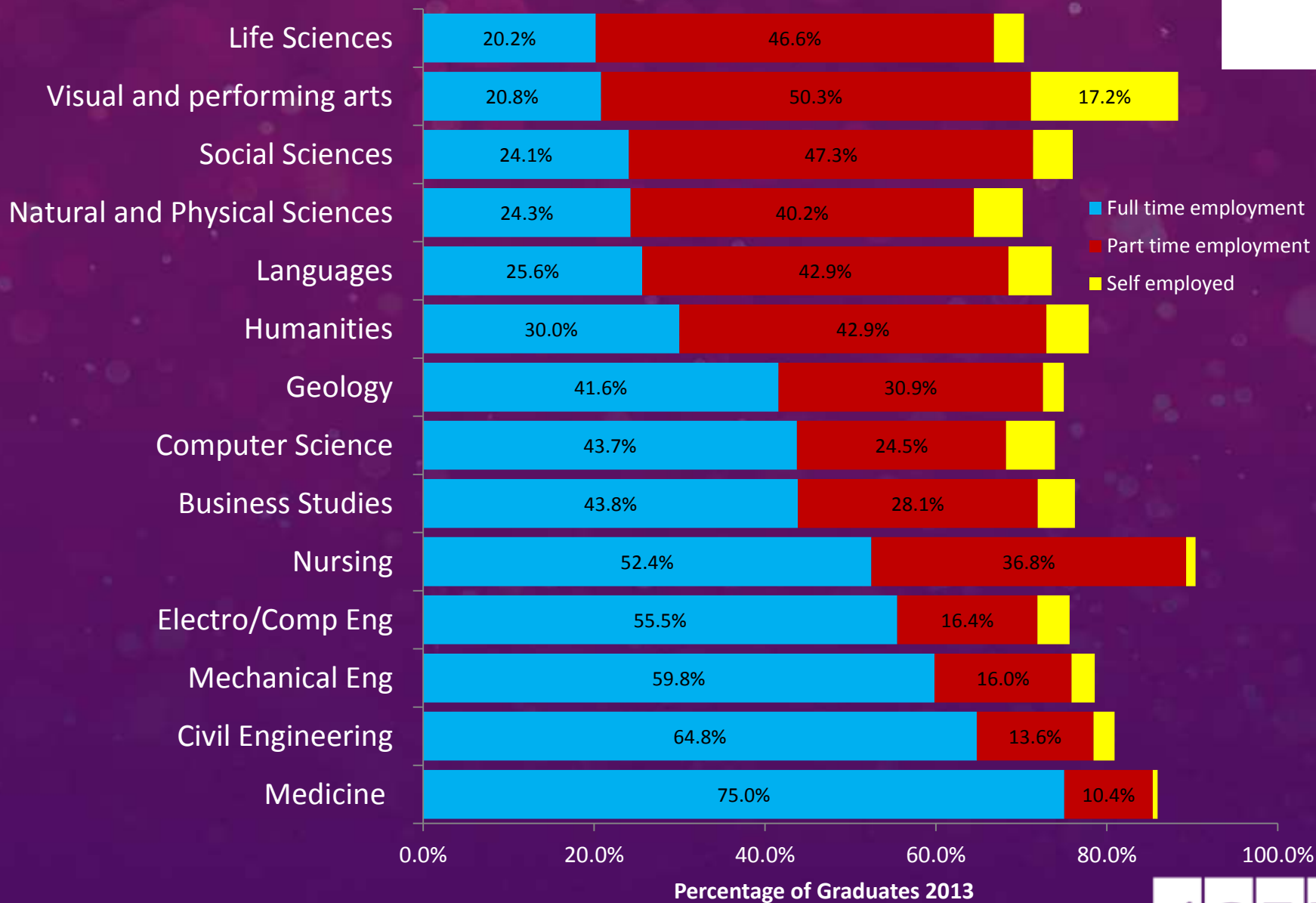
Most have never worked outside of academia, and many have limited contacts with industry, and nor do they want to have any. They do not see it as part of their job to help students with their careers … they do not want to "sacrifice" classroom time to talk about careers …

*The basic problem is that **they don't have anything to say, and don't particularly want to have anything to say"***

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4 to 6 months after graduation

Field	Full time employment
Life Sciences	20.2%
Visual and performing arts	20.8%
Social Sciences	24.1%
Natural and Physical Sciences	24.3%
Languages	25.6%
Humanities	30.0%
Geology	41.6%
Computer Science	43.7%
Business Studies	43.8%
Nursing	52.4%
Electro/Comp Eng	55.5%
Mechanical Eng	59.8%
Civil Engineering	64.8%
Medicine	75.0%

Percentage of Graduates 2013

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Percentage of Graduates 2013

Full time employment
Part time employment

Field	Full time employment	Part time employment
Life Sciences	20.2%	46.6%
Visual and performing arts	20.8%	50.3%
Social Sciences	24.1%	47.3%
Natural and Physical Sciences	24.3%	40.2%
Languages	25.6%	42.9%
Humanities	30.0%	42.9%
Geology	41.6%	30.9%
Computer Science	43.7%	24.5%
Business Studies	43.8%	28.1%
Nursing	52.4%	36.8%
Electro/Comp Eng	55.5%	16.4%
Mechanical Eng	59.8%	16.0%
Civil Engineering	64.8%	13.6%
Medicine	75.0%	10.4%

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Percentage of Graduates 2013

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University Vice-Chancellor

"Jobs are scarce and digital disruption is causing confusion.

Employability is not employment.

Employability is the collection of evidence - learning outcomes, experiences and knowledge - that enable a student to be fit for the purpose of employment".

Data collection

Case studies - 23 graduates, 22 students, 13 academic leaders, 2 careers advisors

Surveys

Field of education	n	%
Bio-science and medical science	30	7.2
Information technology / computer science	43	10.4
Visual and performing arts	172	41.4
Communications (professional and creative writing)	17	4.1
Occupational therapy and other health disciplines	112	27
Other Social Sciences	17	4.1
Other fields (less than 10 responses per field)	14	3.4
Not given	10	2.4
Total	415	100

Graduate employability

Navigate the world of work → Develop skills and knowledge → Develop self → Develop career awareness → Interact with others → Navigate the world of work
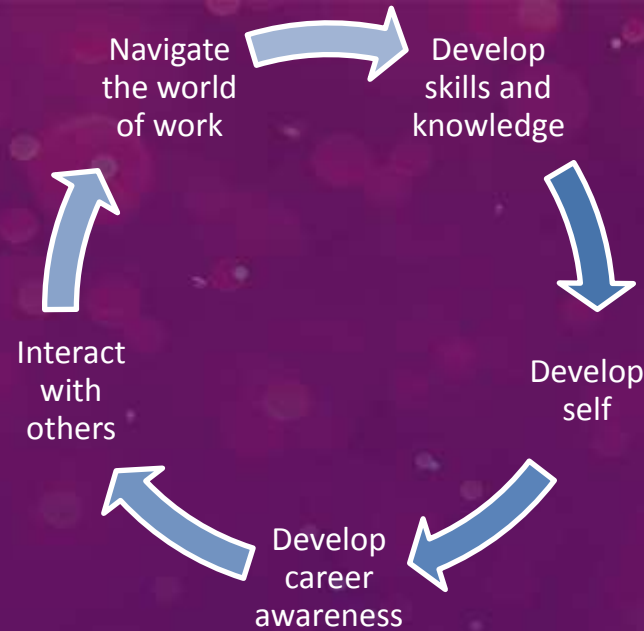
Develop skills and knowledge	Identify and develop discipline-specific and generic skills and knowledge
Develop self	Develop self awareness and self efficacy, and explore possible futures
Develop career awareness	Develop an informed awareness of possible careers and then find or create opportunities to gain experience in these/other contexts
Interact with others	Work with other people in multiple contexts, within and outside of study, to develop generic skills such as those in teamwork and communication
Navigate the world of work	Apply information relating to work and/or further study and establish goals to achieve these.

How well are institutions doing ?

Percentage of students who referred to the employability categories (survey)

Employability categories (%)	What employers look for in graduates
Skills and knowledge	75
Developing career awareness	53
Interacting with others	40
Developing self	46
Navigating the world of work	1

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How well are institutions doing ?

Percentage of students who referred to the employability categories (survey)

Employability categories (%)	What employers look for in graduates	Characteristics of professionals
Skills and knowledge	75	54
Developing career awareness	53	62
Interacting with others	40	67
Developing self	46	34
Navigating the world of work	1	1

How well are institutions doing ?

Percentage of students who referred to the employability categories (survey)

Employability categories (%)	What employers look for in graduates	Characteristics of professionals	Differences between self & professional
Skills and knowledge	75	54	31
Developing career awareness	53	62	27
Interacting with others	40	67	9
Developing self	46	34	19
Navigating the world of work	1	1	0

How well are institutions doing ?

Percentage of students who referred to the employability categories (survey)

Employability categories (%)	What employers look for in graduates	Characteristics of professionals	Differences between self & professional	Contribution of degree
Skills and knowledge	75	54	31	53
Developing career awareness	53	62	27	21
Interacting with others	40	67	9	30
Developing self	46	34	19	19
Navigating the world of work	1	1	0	2

Student strategies

Advance knowledge through study — 27.0%
Practice skills — 17.4%
Undertake work experience — 10.7%
Make contact with professionals — 4.3%
Participate in professional development — 2.4%
Engage in personal reflection — 2.0%
Utilise university resources — 0.3%

Mentioned by students (per cent, rounded to one decimal point)

Study and practice

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Student comments

"While nearly at the end of my degree I still have very little confidence in techniques and skills that would be required for future work. I think more opportunities to practise what we learn is hugely important"

"Though the degree is providing the most basic requirements of this profession, it is lacking a teaching style that imitates one for the real world, thus it is not maximising the preparation required to work in the real world"

"It would be helpful to bring into the mix the ability to talk about career options and pathways. Like a coach who knows the options and knows how to navigate and who to connect with according to the pathway"

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Graduate comments

"What is missing is enough time to empower individuals with generating a plan or seriously looking at options in a supportive environment"

"Where my degree ... failed, has been, sort of, relevance to the real world, in that people don't draw the parallels for you so you don't necessarily start drawing them yourself"

"You need, even personal skills, communication skills ... it's more your networks and how you communicate and how you market yourself and use social media and all of that, as a package, to get work ... My university didn't really offer any of those"

Leader comments

"We are not making [degrees] sufficiently pedagogically broad so that students have that range of attributes when they graduate"

"Moving from corporate life to entrepreneurship or even switching industry sectors requires particular skills, and the transferability of skills should be explored during degree programs"

"Universities have to work with two lenses at the same time … to focus on the first job and make sure that students land in a job of graduate level when they leave … and they also have to wear a second lens which says, "but we have to prepare you intellectually, and conceptually, and creatively for a career and a lifetime of different sorts of jobs"

Why is employability important?

"*Universities (and we're not unique in this) have got themselves into this bind ... and I think we have an attendant responsibility to make sure ... the "talk we talk" can be met by students "walking the walk" in terms of jobs. And I think we can do that better ... unless we can do that, unless we can provide the training, **they're going to stop paying the fees**"*

"*Universities are a critically important part of a strong innovation system. This is a consequence of our research capability and achievements as well as the quality of our graduates. For this reason, we must, as a sector, do all that we can to ensure the employability of our graduates in order to provide the skills base that will **underpin our future economic and social prosperity**"*

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Institutions need to

- embed and resource employability as a key institutional strategy
- engage expertise of careers advisors and professionals at program and course level

- ensure that program delivery reflects professional practice
- enable support for educators to become industry-aware
- students explore and apply knowledge relating to self and career
- authentic learning experiences incorporate critical reflection
- ensure that emerging capabilities are evidenced
- develop post-graduation support

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Thank you

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