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Fab four for record-breaking graduate

Andrew Shenton has made history by becoming the first person to graduate from Northumbria University, Newcastle, with four degrees. The Information Science student entered the University's record books this week when he received his Higher Doctorate at the summer congregation.

Andrew, who works at Monkseaton High School in North Tyneside, said he was 'incredibly proud' to be the first person to reach this milestone.

He said: "I loved my time at Northumbria so much I just kept coming back. My first degree was a life-changing experience for me. I made great friends, developed my research interests and matured as a person.

“I enjoyed my time here so much I couldn’t imagine studying anywhere else. It was challenging, stimulating and fun.”

Andrew, a former Whitley Bay High School pupil, originally graduated from Northumbria with a BA in Library and Information Studies in 1990, before going on to do the MSc Information and Records Management in 1997 and a PhD in Information Science in 2002.

He said: “I felt a sense of anti-climax after successfully defending my PhD thesis as I was only 33 and soon found myself wondering what to do next.

“I wanted to embark on a new intellectual challenge and when Northumbria awarded its first Higher Doctorate in 2009, I finally had the opportunity I was waiting for.”

A Higher Doctorate is awarded to an individual who has published work of high distinction resulting from research that has made a substantial, sustained and original contribution to their field.

Northumbria currently offers eight Higher Doctorate awards and Andrew received his Doctor of Letters (DLitt) at congregation this month.

For his Higher Doctorate, Andrew chose to explore new ideas within Library and Information Science, rather than return to the subject of his PhD research.

He said: “I sought to demonstrate unnoticed links between existing areas of knowledge, apply theories from other disciplines in unprecedented areas, and pioneer innovative techniques for use in research and practice.

“This was supported by my work mentoring current PhD students as it brought me into contact with the data and ideas of other researchers. I also learnt via blogs and online postings.”

Andrew added: “I can heartily recommend the use of the Higher Doctorate goal to give a clear focus and sense of direction to one’s writing and research.

“My only disappointment now is that there isn’t another stage of progression after this. I would happily do another degree at Northumbria if there was something beyond a Higher Doctorate.”

Professor Gobinda Chowdhury, Head of Mathematics and Information Science, said: “This is an excellent achievement and we’re delighted a student from our department has become the first person to graduate from Northumbria University with four degrees.

“It’s a testament to the excellence of our programmes and the outstanding experience we offer that talented students such as Andrew continue to return to us for further study.

“We wish Andrew every success in the future.”

Mathematics and Information Science at Northumbria is internationally recognised as an iSchool, a globally recognised status, awarded to only five other universities in the UK and 18 in Europe.

This prestigious accolade is only given to universities with a proven quality standard of teaching and research across the academic disciplines of information sciences, computer sciences and information systems.

For more information about courses in this field go to:
www.northumbria.ac.uk/engineeringandenvironment

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk