



UUK Event

Feb 09, 2026 12:54 GMT

## Business leaders and universities unite to pave way for a new era of skilled graduate jobs

Northumbria was selected as one of a small number of universities to host a *Future Jobs* round table event on behalf of Universities UK, the representative body for more than 140 universities across the United Kingdom.

The *Future Jobs* initiative marks the start of a national conversation about

matching graduate skills to employer needs.

Evidence gathered from the discussions will feed into a new national Future Jobs Roadmap, launching this summer, setting out practical solutions to improve graduate employability and help businesses to grow faster.

With AI rapidly transforming the workplace, universities across the UK are adapting how they prepare students for future careers. It is estimated that more than 11 million additional graduates are needed to fill highly-skilled jobs crucial to the UK's economic growth, in sectors including life sciences, creative industries, digital technology and defence.

The roundtable explored how universities and businesses can collaborate to grow the graduate pipeline, create new high-quality jobs for local people and prevent graduates leaving the region for better opportunities in the south.

Organisations attending the event at Northumbria University included Greggs, Siemens Energy, Lloyds Group, Port of Tyne, Northern Powergrid, Lockheed Martin, QTS Data Centers and the North East Combined Authority, as well as representatives from the NHS and the Confederation of British Industries (CBI).

Discussions focused on better matching graduate skills to employers' needs, supporting regional industries and driving innovation to enable businesses to grow and create more well-paid jobs.

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University and Chair of Universities for North East England, said: "We were delighted to host this event at our campus in the heart of Newcastle.

“Graduate employability and experiential learning are areas of utmost importance for Northumbria University. Our programmes are designed in partnership with employers to ensure they deliver graduates with the skills businesses need.

“Our success is evident. Northumbria is top 20 in the UK for the number of graduates going into skilled jobs, and top 10 in the UK for graduate business start-ups based on turnover. It’s vital that we maintain and develop relationships with employers and play our part in developing the pipeline of talent and skills needed for the economy and society, especially within the North East region.

“The discussions held at this event were positive and informative and it is clear that there is a real appetite from businesses to work more closely with education providers.”

Roisin Currie CBE, Chief Executive of Greggs plc, said: “We are living in a world where the only constant now is change. Therefore, graduates play a really key part in moving us forward. They are naturally curious, they are digital natives and they are also willing to challenge the norm and bring you thoughts and ideas. That’s really critical if we want to move forward and really improve our businesses.

“We need to continue to be innovative, and that’s not just from our perspective of technology. That’s also in terms of following consumer trends and understanding what the skills are that we’ll need for the next decade and beyond.

“Conversations like this are so important – universities need to understand more about the challenges that businesses are facing and to help with that, businesses also need to make sure that they open their doors to help that education process so that universities can prepare students with the skills that we need for the future to keep moving forward and improving. And for a

lot of these challenges, we don't need government policy. We don't need funding. We just need to work together – a lot of the solutions are within our gift.”

Professor Malcolm Press CBE, President of Universities UK, said: “Universities are critical to creating a better future for the next generation, something everyone wants. Given how quickly the world of work is changing, that will only happen if we make sure graduates have the skills that employers are going to need, now and over the long term.

“Today’s graduates are going to have careers that last into the 2070s. Our Future Jobs roundtables, like this one at Northumbria University, are about sparking the conversations between business and universities to make sure we’re equipping people with the skills they’re going to need for long, successful careers and that business can access the talent they need to drive the country’s future prosperity.”

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#### UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

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