



# AQR - NCI Work Placements

## Quality in HE: Sectoral Findings & Enhancement Showcase

17<sup>th</sup> October 2023



# NCI Work Placements - Context

- **School of Business**

- UG programmes: BA(Hons) in Business, HRM, Marketing, and Accounting & Finance.
- Students *opt* for a work placement (UG1, UG2, WP, UG3), typically 8-12 months fixed paid employment. Must complete 5 credit Career Management Skills Module to be eligible.
- Students with completed work placements: 35 in 2021-22; 73 in 2022-23.

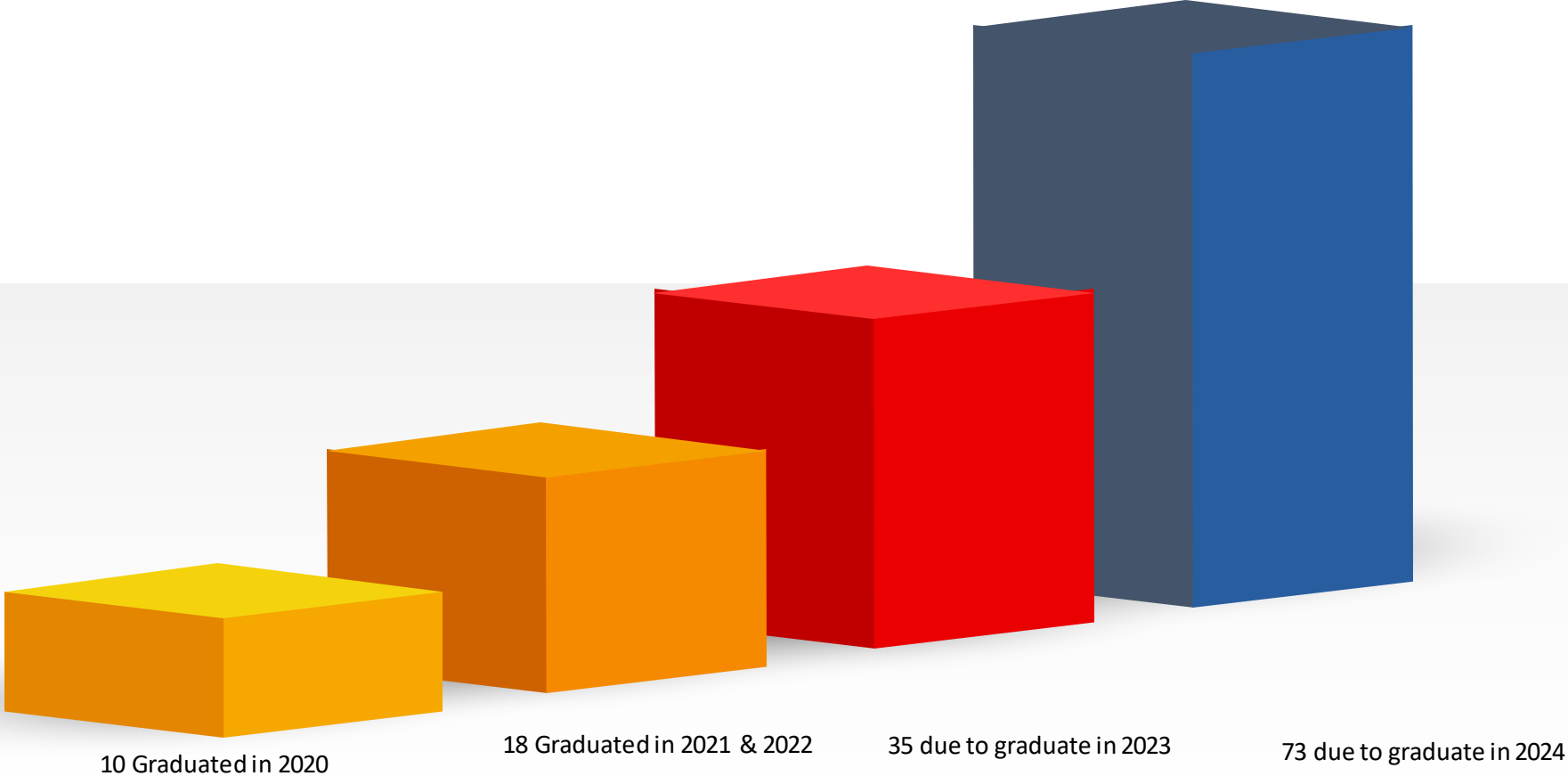
- **School of Computing**

- UG programmes: BSc (Hons) Computing; BSc(Hons) Technology Management. (6 months)
- PG programme: MSc Cybersecurity; MSc FinTech. (12 weeks)
- Students with completed work placements: 75 in 2021-22; 50 in 2022-23.

# NCI Work Placements – Key Features

- Placements are **embedded in the curriculum** (credit-bearing and assessed)
- **Student support** at different stages (before/during/after placement)
  - Programme talks, 5 credit Career and Management Skills module in Stage 2
  - Events and activities (CV, mock interviews) by Career Development and Employability.
  - Dedicated Staff: Career Development team, Programme Director, academic supervisors during placements.
- **Feedback**
  - Surveys and Focus Groups → student feedback on their work placement experiences.
- **Quality Assurance**
  - Assessment follows the same QA as other modules (e.g. second marking).
  - External examiner reports
  - Review of grade classifications
  - Surveys as part of NCI Annual Programme Monitoring and QOI programme reviews and validations.

# Growth in School of Business Placement Numbers





Professional headshots



Employer led mock interviews



Structured round table networking session



Career Treks



5 credit  
Career Management Skills Module



Past placement mixer events

# NCI Work Placements – Graduate Outcomes

- **Work Placement benefits students among different dimensions**

- Academic performance → Higher % of First-Class Honours degree classifications.
- Career and skills development → application of academic knowledge into real world; improvements in social and identity capital; better informed career decisions.
- Graduate outcomes → full-time employment; in graduate roles; permanent positions with placement employers.

- **Positive Feedback** from Programme Directors and Lecturers

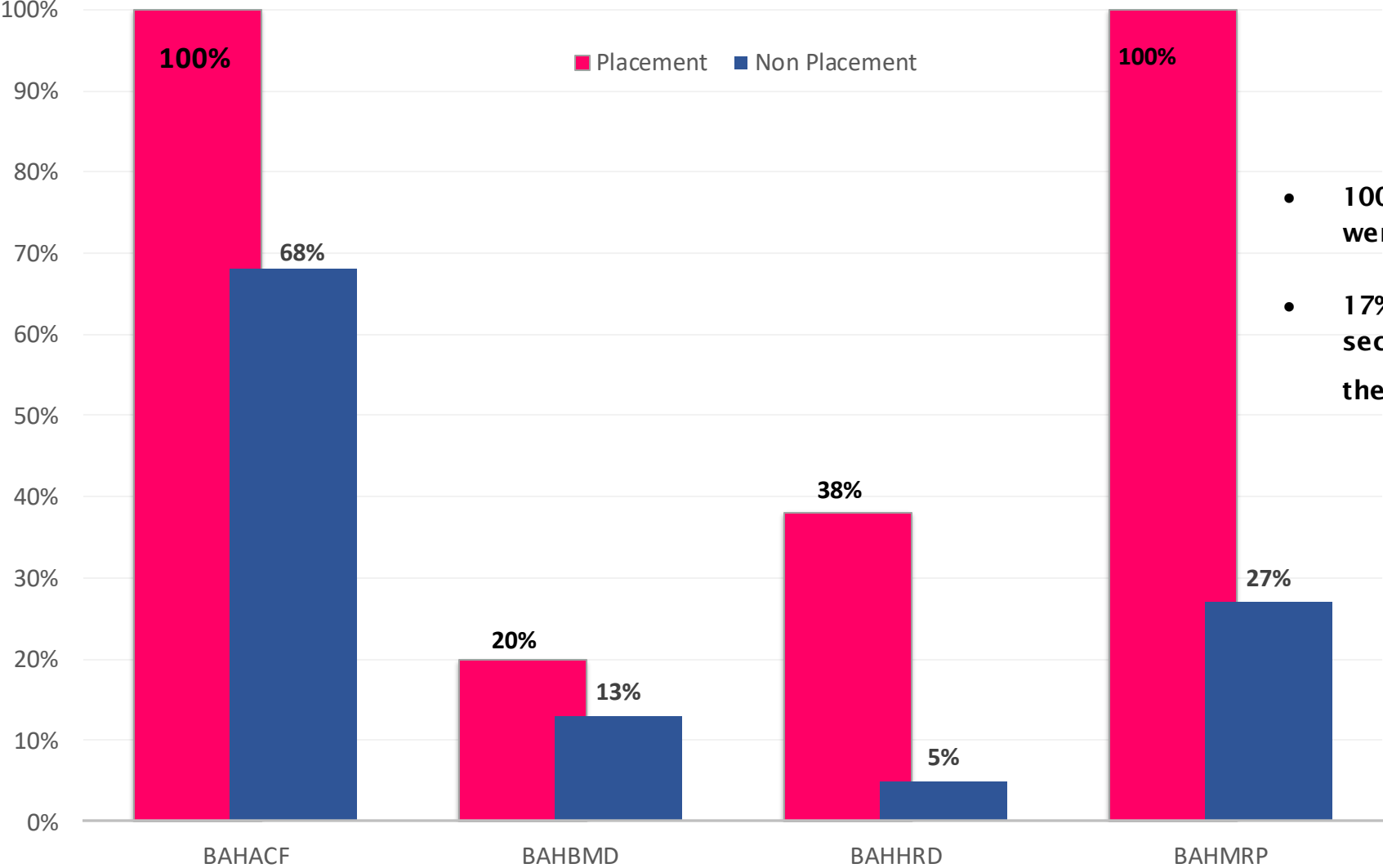
“Final year students coming from work placement are very motivated and engaged with the modules”

“They are more mature and professional”

“Lecture-student partnership to share work placement projects in the classroom”

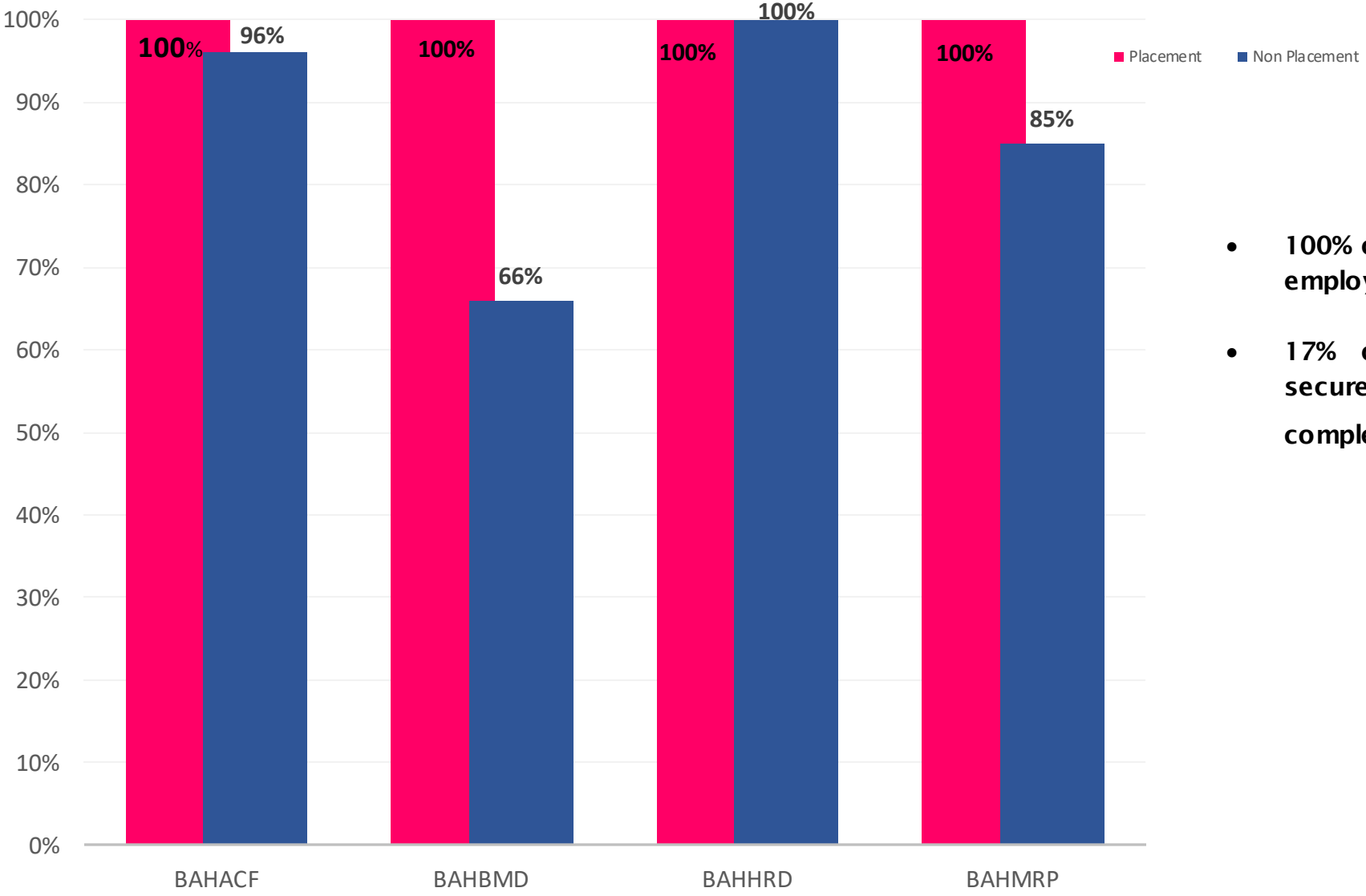
# Impact of placements on 1<sup>st</sup> class honours attainment

## School of Business (class of 2021)



- 100% of those who were available for work were employed in graduate level work.
- 17% of those who completed a placement secured a graduate role with the company they completed their placement with.

# Impact of placements on graduate level employment School of Business (class of 2021)



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# NCI Work Placements – Survey Feedback

- 87% said they were clearer about what they wanted to do in their future education and career.
- 93% felt it gave them the opportunity to develop their professional network.
- 98% said it helped them identify skills, strengths and areas for development.
- 100% said they felt it gave them a competitive edge in the graduate jobs market.

# In their own words ...

“

I am capable of more than I previously thought.

”

“

My confidence has improved massively to work alone which I never thought I've been good at.

”

“

This placement has opened the door to a grad role, further education/qualifications, given me confidence and helped me develop as a person, a professional and a student.

”

“

It has given me more real life examples and insight for understanding different modules

”

“

It has helped me develop professionally so that when I am finished college I feel I have this as an advantage and know more what to expect

”

“

I have learned a lot about the sector of business I am working in I have made a solid decision on where I wanna go after I graduate and that I wanna come back and work for this company.

”

“

I will be able to apply on-the-job experience to theories and frameworks covered over the course of our final year.

”

“

I'll have practical knowledge of what we are learning, rather than reading it off a slide, and this will make my answers much more filling than other students.

”

# NCI Work Placements – Lessons to date

- **Lessons learned and future areas for development**

- **Resources** to manage increasing students on work placements

- Human → additional academic supervisors.
- IT → automatisisation of processes e.g. tri-partite agreements with companies

- **Diversity and Inclusion** to provide equal opportunities

- Academic barriers → intention to remove Stage 2 2:1 criteria for work placement participation.
- Low socio-economic status → improve advice and support to students with SUSI grants.

- **Feedback** from work placement students returning to final year has been very helpful in improving our support at different stages of the work placement programme.

- All these are also important for future expansion of work placements into other programmes (e.g. psychology)

# NCI Work Placements – Final Remarks

- The work placement initiative is **highly successful**, enhancing NCI's programmes, the student experience and graduate outcomes.
- The **increasing number of students on work placements** creates greater opportunities for **collaboration** between NCI and industry.
- But it also poses **some challenges** in terms of resources and management.

**Finally ... Do you want to keep in touch with us?**

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