Personal testimony from Dr Lukman Z. Mohamad, PhD student 2002-2006

“I applied for eight reputable universities with excellent educational standards when I decided to do my PhD degree overseas. One of the primary reasons I chose Durham was Professor Simon Hackett. When I contacted him through e-mail to express my intention to undertake the PhD under his supervision he was welcoming and pleasant. He gave me a very good impression and flavour of what my university life would be like at Durham.

What I loved was that Professor Hackett allowed me to develop into an independent learner, researcher and thinker. I was able to experience the thrill of intellectual satisfaction through my own discoveries. His excellent supervision led me through the challenging process of doing PhD and motivated me to aim even higher in my career.

He is really friendly, easy to talk to, accessible, knowledgeable and encouraging and there was always support available when I needed it. Professor Hackett has not only helped me to fulfill my dream of having a doctorate, but he has changed the way I appreciate the world through the knowledge I have gained from him.

Durham has all the important elements to give its students the quality of a balanced education in a friendly and supportive campus atmosphere with modern facilities. As an international student, I was so impressed with the facilities provided and cherished my time at Durham from the moment I arrived. But, to have a compassionate supervisor like Professor Simon Hackett is a bonus, the icing on the cake. I will always remember his drive, passion and commitment. He inspired me to serve the community and the profession with enthusiasm and integrity. I am proud to be a graduate of Durham and to have had a supervisor like him. It is the best decision I ever made."

Dr Mohamad is now Head of the Social Work Department in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia.

Personal testimony from Dr Nashmi Al-Anazi, PhD student 2005-2008

“I was awarded my PhD degree in Social Work from Durham University in 2008. In 2005 I contacted Professor Simon Hackett at the School of Applied Social Sciences to ask him to supervise my PhD thesis on the subject of child abuse. I believe that my decision to complete my PhD under the supervision of Professor Hackett was one of the best I have ever taken. I learned a tremendous amount from him with regard to both the topic of my thesis and the field in general. During my PhD, Simon gave me a lot from his knowledge and his valuable time. He was always available when I was in need of his help and advice. He understood and respected my cultural and language differences. In short, I have been privileged to complete my PhD degree under the supervision of Professor Simon Hackett.”

Dr Al-Anazi is now Assistant Professor in the Sociology and Social Work Department at Al-Imam Mohammad Bin Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.