**14812, Hadeel Alshatti**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is one of the most important days of my life. It is difficult to put into words how fortunate I am and how happy I feel today to be in this place to represent my friends and the other graduate students. I would like to express my gratitude to every member of staff at the University of Newcastle for the great job they did to make the dream of graduation possible for each of us. I want to extend my gratitude to every person who supported me and stood by me since I started my educational journey. I especially want to thank my family and children for all their patience, love and care as they surrounded me during my studies. I could never forget to thank my great supervisors at school because without them I would not be who I am today. I have to stress that my gratitude to everybody today is developed from an appreciation for all the professional work that myself and other students received at Newcastle University. Last, but not lease, I want to express my gratitude for my country Kuwait who supported me. I'm thankful for the support and trust they gave me, and I worked very hard to keep that trust and promise.

I am a mother of 3 children and I carried many responsibilities. Originally, I thought this path would be difficult if not impossible! So I was very hesitant to take that step forward and decide to study. Obviously, it wasn’t an easy way to take. But I was satisfied, because I always believed that starting with a smooth way is not a good sign, knowing, that at the end it might be a slippery way. So, after much thought, I decided to try my rocky road, which you can see today ended successfully.

When I started my master’s degree I felt this was the place I want to continue my PhD studies. I felt my choice was the right choice. During the 7 years I spent at Newcastle University to get my master and PhD degrees, I found all the love and encouragement that I needed. I found great teachers who taught me for a life time, and I realized the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said, “The man who can make hard things easy is the educator.”

All of us who are graduating today come from different backgrounds and have different stories. But, each of us made a difficult choice several years ago to walk this challenging path. Today we stand here, having reached our destination. One season of our lives is completed. Now, we face the start of a new season. We have completed our education. Now we begin the lives and careers we dreamed of having. Regardless, of our field of study we can now fulfill our desire for a better future for ourselves and our families. Not only will my continued success be an example for my 3 children, but also for others back in Kuwait who have similar dreams.

Thank you