Graduate Careers Australia

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# GradStats

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## Employment and Salary Outcomes of Recent Higher Education Graduates

Graduate Careers Australia's (GCA) annual Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) is a study of the activities of new higher education graduates around four months after the completion of their qualifications. In the 2010 AGS, new graduates who completed the requirements for awards in the calendar year 2009 were surveyed regarding their major activities, including full-time study, full- or part-time employment, seeking employment, or their unavailability for work or study.

*GradStats* gives a summary of preliminary data concerning the destinations of Australian resident bachelor degree graduates. Overall, 61.5 per cent of the almost 162,000 Australian resident graduates who were surveyed responded to the AGS. For further information on graduate employment, graduate destination statistics and GCA, visit www.graduatecareers.com.au.

## Graduates in 2010: Work, Study, Salaries and Course Satisfaction – Key Points

- Of bachelor degree graduates either seeking or in full-time employment in 2010 (see Table 1a);
  - 76.2 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (down from 79.2 per cent in 2009 and 85.2 per cent in 2008);
  - 15.1 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (up from 13.4 per cent in 2009 and 9.6 per cent in 2008); and
  - 8.6 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey (7.4 per cent in 2009 and 5.2 per cent in 2008).
- Employment prospects for new graduates showed continued improvement from 2004 until the expected fall in these figures in 2009 due to the global economic downturn (see Figure 1). An anticipated recovery in the labour market for new graduates did not eventuate in 2010 and these new employment figures suggest that recruiters have remained cautious in their hiring plans.
- Of the 23.8 per cent still seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey, two thirds (15.1 per cent) had found part-time employment while the remainder (8.6 per cent) were without any work.
- Around one-fifth of respondents (19.0 per cent – up slightly from 18.3 per cent last year), were undertaking further full-time study (see Table 1).
- The median annual starting salary (for new Australian resident bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia) increased to $49,000 from $48,000 in 2009. This was 79.8 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings for males ($61,400 at the time of the AGS[1]), up from 78.2 per cent in 2009 (see Figure 2).
- Males started full-time work on a median salary of $50,000 (unchanged from 2009) while females in full-time work earned $48,000 (up from $47,000 in 2009) (see Table 3).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 93.2 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

1. Average Weekly Earnings for males are used as a constant for year-to-year analysis of change, and not in a prescriptive manner. This is discussed in the full *Graduate Salaries* reports.

# Employment Outcomes & Further Study

**The results of the 2010 AGS show that, of bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment, 76.2 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, with a further 15.1 per cent working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (see Table 1a).**

An additional 8.6 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment four months after completing their qualifications. These figures represent a further fall in graduates' full-time employment prospects after the 2009 survey in which employment figures reflected a softer labour market arising from the global financial crisis.

Within an economic and political milieu that featured concerns regarding a second global economic downturn and a prolonged federal election, the proportion of graduates available for full-time employment fell between 2009 and 2010, from 66.0 per cent to 64.7 per cent (see Table 1), suggesting that a number of new graduates were discouraged from entering the full-time labour force.

In the same period, and probably related to the same political and economic uncertainty, the proportion of graduates continuing in further full-time study rose from 18.3 per cent in 2009 to 19.0 per cent in 2010. Generally, between one-fifth and one-quarter of respondents elect to continue in further full-time study[2].

As in the general population, part-time employment is an important destination for some new graduates. In 2010, 10.7 per cent of respondents were either in or seeking part-time work and were not seeking full-time employment (10.1 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively). This is the highest proportion of bachelor graduates in the part-time labour market (and not available for full-time employment) seen in the past decade[3].

Similarly, Table 1a shows that, of graduates still seeking a full-time position at the time of the survey, about two-thirds were working in a part-time position while doing so.

Of those graduates available for full-time employment, males (75.4 per cent — see Table 1a) were less likely than females (76.8 per cent) to have found a full-time position by the time of the survey. Females were less likely than males (7.3 per cent compared with 10.6 per cent) to have been unemployed while seeking full-time employment and they were more likely (15.9 per cent compared with 13.9 per cent) to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment. This latter difference (regularly seen in these figures) is likely to be a reflection of females' numerical dominance in fields of education such as teaching and nursing, in which there are greater opportunities for part-time professional employment.

Males were mores likely than females to have undertaken further full-time study in 2010 after completing their course in the previous year (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2008-10 (%).**

| | Available for full-time employment (see Table 1a) | In full-time study | In part-time or casual employment, not seeking full-time employment | Not working, seeking part-time or casual employment only | Unavailable for full-time study or any employment | Total %† | Total cases |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Males** | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 68.6 | 20.5 | 5.7 | 0.3 | 4.9 | 100 | 24,035 |
| 2009 | 68.9 | ~ 18.3 | ~ 7.4 | ~ 0.6 | 4.8 | 100 | 23,930 |
| ^ 2010 | ~ 67.1 | ~ 19.8 | 7.3 | ~ 0.4 | ~ 5.4 | 100 | 24,438 |
| **Females** | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 64.9 | 19.0 | 10.1 | 0.5 | 5.5 | 100 | 40,538 |
| 2009 | ~ 64.2 | ~ 18.2 | ~ 11.7 | ~ 0.7 | ~ 5.1 | 100 | 39,516 |
| ^ 2010 | ~ 63.3 | ^ 18.6 | 11.8 | 0.7 | ~ 5.7 | 100 | 40,159 |
| **Persons*** | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 66.2 | 19.6 | 8.4 | 0.5 | 5.3 | 100 | 64,648 |
| 2009 | 66.0 | ~ 18.3 | ~ 10.1 | ~ 0.7 | ~ 5.0 | 100 | 63,493 |
| 2010 | ~ 64.7 | ~ 19.0 | 10.1 | ~ 0.6 | ~ 5.6 | 100 | 65,045 |

*Total persons might not equal males plus females as some respondents did not identify sex.
† Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
~ This figure is significantly different to that for the previous year ($p < .05$).
^ 2010 figures for males were significantly different to those for females ($p < .05$).

2. See related discussion in *Graduate Destinations* reports.
3. See related discussion in *Graduate Destinations* reports.

**Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by sex, 2008-10 (%).**

| | In full-time employment | Seeking full-time employment, not working | Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual | Total seeking full-time employment | Total %† | Total cases | **Had full-time employment before May in final year of study and still with that employer at time of AGS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Males** | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 85.5 | 6.0 | 8.5 | 14.5 | 100 | 16,490 | 16.9 |
| 2009 | ~ 79.4 | ~ 8.7 | ~ 11.9 | ~ 20.6 | 100 | 16,488 | 18.8 |
| ^ 2010 | ~ 75.4 | ~ 10.6 | ~ 13.9 | ~ 24.6 | 100 | 16,399 | 20.0 |
| **Females** | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 85.0 | 4.7 | 10.3 | 15.0 | 100 | 26,292 | 10.7 |
| 2009 | ~ 79.0 | ~ 6.6 | ~ 14.4 | ~ 21.0 | 100 | 25,372 | 12.8 |
| ^ 2010 | ~ 76.8 | ~ 7.3 | ~ 15.9 | ~ 23.2 | 100 | 25,646 | 13.0 |
| **Persons*** | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 85.2 | 5.2 | 9.6 | 14.8 | 100 | 42,811 | 13.1 |
| 2009 | ~ 79.2 | ~ 7.4 | ~ 13.4 | ~ 20.8 | 100 | 41,878 | 15.2 |
| 2010 | ~ 76.2 | ~ 8.6 | ~ 15.1 | ~ 23.8 | 100 | 42,081 | 15.7 |

*Total persons might not equal males plus females as some respondents did not identify sex. † Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
** Percentages based on the group of bachelor degree graduates in full-time employment.
~ This figure is significantly different to that for the previous year ($p < .05$).
^ 2010 figures for males were significantly different to those for females ($p < .05$).

Table 1a indicates that 15.7 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position early (before 1 May) in their final year of study (15.2 per cent in 2009). As in previous years, males were notably more likely than females to have had their position before 1 May in their final year of study. This figure can vary across institution type, field of education and mode of attendance with many of these respondents having studied on a part-time basis.

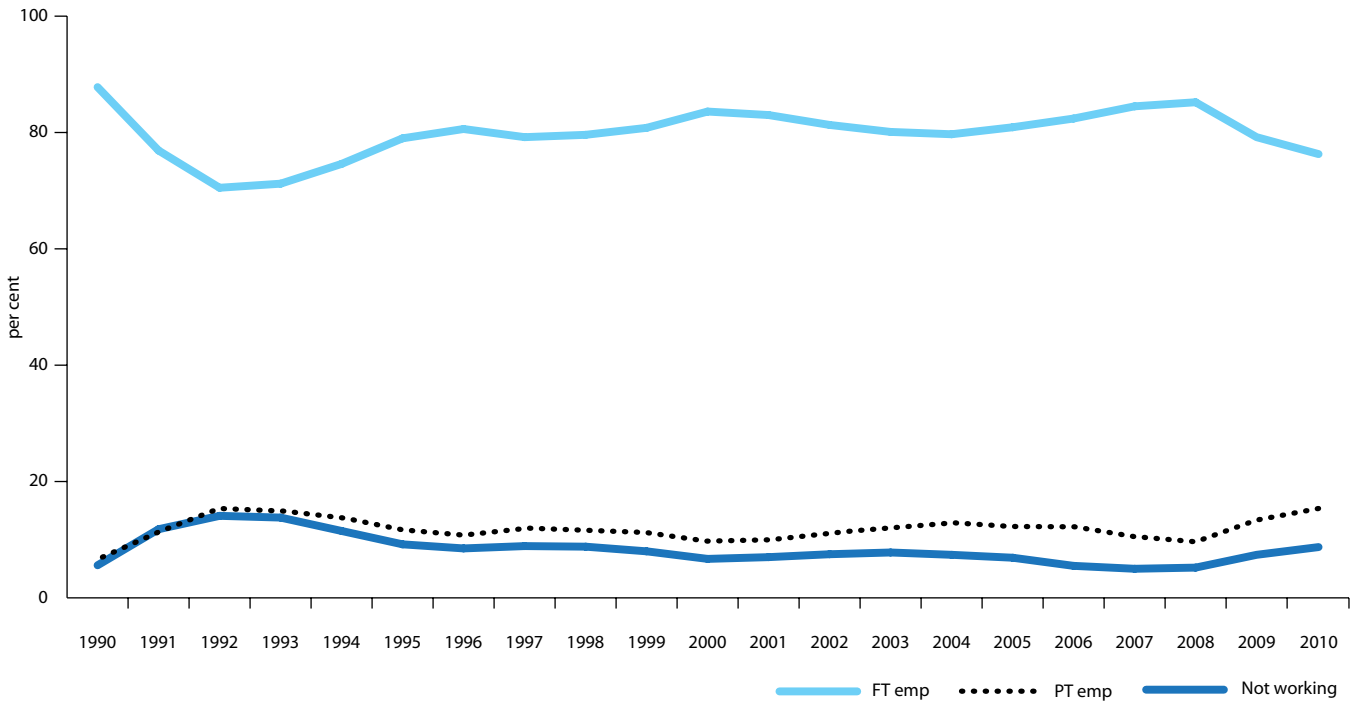


**Figure 1: Bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment; percentage in full-time employment, percentage working part-time while seeking full-time employment, percentage not working while seeking full-time employment (1990-2010).**

**Table 1b: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by various cohorts, 2010 (%).**

| | In full-time employment) | Seeking full-time employment, not working | Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual | Total seeking full-time employment | Total %† | Total cases |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **76.2** | **8.6** | **15.1** | **23.8** | **100** | **42,081** |
| Aged less than 25 | 74.3 | 8.8 | 16.8 | 25.7 | 100 | 27,591 |
| Graduates with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background | 80.3 | 7.8 | 11.9 | 19.7 | 100 | 345 |
| Graduates from a non-English speaking background | 66.0 | 16.7 | 17.3 | 34.8 | 100 | 5,817 |
| Graduates with a disability | 66.3 | 16.1 | 17.6 | 33.7 | 100 | 971 |
| Studied mainly full-time * | 74.8 | 9.1 | 16.1 | 25.2 | 100 | 35,530 |
| Studied mainly part-time * | 83.8 | 6.2 | 10.0 | 16.2 | 100 | 6,501 |
| Studied mainly internally (on-campus) | 75.1 | 9.0 | 15.9 | 24.9 | 100 | 35,620 |
| Studied mainly externally (distance) | 87.5 | 4.8 | 7.8 | 12.5 | 100 | 3,193 |
| Mixed mode (internal and distance) | 77.4 | 8.0 | 14.6 | 22.6 | 100 | 3,194 |
| Double/combined degree ~ | 78.0 | 7.7 | 14.2 | 22.0 | 100 | 5,629 |
| Single degree ~ | 76.0 | 8.7 | 15.3 | 24.0 | 100 | 36,162 |
| Regional resident # | 79.2 | 7.3 | 13.6 | 20.8 | 100 | 9,551 |
| Capital city resident # | 75.4 | 8.9 | 15.7 | 24.6 | 100 | 30,699 |

† Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
* ~ # Full-time employment figures within these categories were significantly different from each other ($p < .05$).

Table 1b shows employment figures for various bachelor degree sub-groups. Figures for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates and those who reported having a disability need to be interpreted with caution because small numbers of respondents are involved. More generally, as the figures in Table 1b can also be affected by other variables, some caution is required when comparing these preliminary summary results.

Those who had studied on a mainly part-time basis were significantly more likely to have been in full-time employment at the time of the survey (83.8 per cent) than those who had studied mainly full-time (74.8 per cent). However, part-time students often have full-time employment while studying and this gives them an artificial 'advantage' in terms of such unadjusted employment figures. Similarly, graduates who studied externally (or by distance – usually part-time students) have seemingly better full-time employment figures than those who studied internally.

The figures in Table 1b indicate that graduates from a non-English speaking background were taking longer to find full-time employment compared with the total group of graduates (a significant difference at 66.0 per cent compared with 76.2 per cent).

Graduates with a combined or double degree had significantly better employment figures (78.0 per cent in full-time employment) than those with a single degree (76.0 per cent). Respondents living in regional areas were also significantly more likely to be in full-time employment than their counterparts in a capital city (79.2 per cent *cf.* 75.4 per cent).

Table 2 shows a breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment by field of education.

Labour market factors that are peculiar to some fields of education can affect the proportions in and seeking employment, especially in a survey such as this, which takes place around four months after the completion of degree requirements. For example, medical graduates, of whom 97.3 per cent were in full-time employment, always have high proportions in this category due to the requirement that they serve an internship in a public hospital for a period after graduation. Similarly, pharmacy graduates (97.7 per cent in full-time employment) are required to undertake a 12 month period of supervised employment as trainee pharmacists in order to gain professional registration. Other fields with high proportions in full-time employment at the time of the survey were dentistry (93.6 per cent), surveying (93.1 per cent), nursing – initial training (92.9 per cent), civil engineering (92.5 per cent), veterinary science (90.7 per cent) and mining engineering (90.5 per cent).

Respondents in visual/performing arts, life sciences, social sciences, psychology and humanities were the most likely to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the AGS (all with more than one-in-three doing so). While only a little more than half of graduates (53.3 per cent) from visual/performing arts who were available for full-time employment had found a full-time position at the time of the survey, of the remaining visual/performing arts graduates almost a third took part-time work (32.5 per cent) while they continued their search for a full-time position.

These examples demonstrate that the graduates of some fields of education can take longer to find full-time employment than those from other fields, as reflected in the figures reported by GCA. Additionally, not all employment reported by graduates will necessarily be in the area in which the graduate trained. For the graduates of some fields such as the visual/performing arts, employment opportunities in the occupations for which they trained can be limited and it might be the case that some prefer to work on a part-time basis or not at all while seeking relevant employment.

Table 2 also indicates that 15.7 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position early (before 1 May) in their final year of study. This figure can vary across institution type, field of education and mode of attendance with many of these respondents having studied on a part-time basis and further illustrates the differences across fields in terms of the time taken to find a full-time position.

For example, some fields with very small proportions of graduates in their full-time position in their final year of study had very high employment figures at the time of the survey, indicating that they had been absorbed into the labour market very quickly. Conversely, other fields had high proportions in their full-time position in their final year of study but had relatively low employment figures. This illustrates the point that graduates in different fields can face differing labour markets in terms of supply and demand, and different methods of recruitment, and these differences can be reflected in the AGS figures.

Looking at the wider population, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures for May 2010 show that, in the general labour force (aged 15-64), 2.7 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were unemployed (down from 3.4 per cent in May 2009). The comparative figure for those with a postgraduate degree was 3.5 per cent and for those with a graduate or postgraduate diploma it was 2.3 per cent. For the total population (with or without non-school qualifications), the unemployment rate was 5.3 per cent and 8.0 per cent for persons with no post-secondary qualifications. AGS employment figures differ from ABS figures in that the AGS separates those in part-time employment from those in full-time employment while the ABS includes those with any work at all in the 'employed' category. However, these figures do indicate that the longer-term prospects for those with higher education qualifications remain very positive.

**Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of education, 2010 (%).**

| | In full-time employment | Seeking full-time employment, not working | Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual | Total seeking full-time employment | Total %† | Total cases | *Had full-time employment before May in final year of study and still with that employer at time of AGS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture | 69.3 | 12.7 | 18.0 | 30.7 | 100 | 599 | 24.6 |
| Architecture | 75.8 | 8.9 | 15.3 | 24.2 | 100 | 327 | 10.1 |
| Building | 84.3 | 6.1 | 9.6 | 15.7 | 100 | 560 | 29.4 |
| Urban/Regional Planning | 81.8 | 6.6 | 11.6 | 18.2 | 100 | 198 | 21.0 |
| Humanities | 66.0 | 12.1 | 21.9 | 34.0 | 100 | 3,759 | 20.4 |
| Languages | 66.8 | 13.1 | 20.1 | 33.2 | 100 | 558 | 18.0 |
| Visual/Performing Arts | 53.3 | 14.2 | 32.5 | 46.7 | 100 | 1,414 | 8.1 |
| Social Sciences | 63.2 | 16.5 | 20.3 | 36.8 | 100 | 310 | 17.9 |
| Psychology | 65.7 | 11.0 | 23.4 | 34.3 | 100 | 1,241 | 18.7 |
| Social Work | 77.7 | 8.2 | 14.1 | 22.3 | 100 | 864 | 15.4 |
| Business Studies | 75.1 | 9.2 | 15.7 | 24.9 | 100 | 6,648 | 23.8 |
| Accounting | 79.1 | 10.6 | 10.4 | 20.9 | 100 | 3,175 | 26.8 |
| Economics | 72.9 | 13.2 | 13.9 | 27.1 | 100 | 462 | 16.9 |
| Education - Initial | 74.8 | 3.9 | 21.3 | 25.2 | 100 | 4,786 | 9.5 |
| Education - Post/Other | 83.3 | 14.3 | 2.4 | 16.7 | 100 | 42 | 37.1 |
| Aeronautical Engineering | 73.9 | 11.5 | 14.6 | 26.1 | 100 | 157 | 11.2 |
| Chemical Engineering | 67.7 | 20.7 | 11.5 | 32.3 | 100 | 217 | 8.8 |
| Civil Engineering | 92.5 | 5.6 | 1.9 | 7.5 | 100 | 644 | 12.4 |
| Electrical Engineering | 76.9 | 13.9 | 9.2 | 23.1 | 100 | 303 | 15.5 |
| Electronic/Computer Eng. | 76.9 | 12.5 | 10.7 | 23.1 | 100 | 281 | 15.3 |
| Mechanical Engineering | 80.5 | 12.0 | 7.6 | 19.5 | 100 | 527 | 15.6 |
| Mining Engineering | 90.5 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 9.5 | 100 | 84 | 9.2 |
| Other Engineering | 84.9 | 9.3 | 5.7 | 15.1 | 100 | 644 | 13.0 |
| Surveying | 93.1 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 6.9 | 100 | 101 | 23.4 |
| Dentistry | 93.6 | 1.6 | 4.8 | 6.4 | 100 | 187 | 0.6 |
| Health Other | 74.4 | 8.9 | 16.7 | 25.6 | 100 | 1,813 | 15.7 |
| Nursing (Initial) | 92.9 | 2.1 | 5.0 | 7.1 | 100 | 3,063 | 4.3 |
| Nursing (Post-Initial) | 89.9 | 3.9 | 6.2 | 10.1 | 100 | 355 | 5.0 |
| Pharmacy | 97.7 | 0.7 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 100 | 557 | 0.9 |
| Medicine | 97.3 | 1.7 | 1.0 | 2.7 | 100 | 1,086 | 0.3 |
| Rehabilitation | 88.8 | 3.6 | 7.6 | 11.2 | 100 | 1,232 | 0.1 |
| Law | 82.1 | 7.1 | 10.8 | 17.9 | 100 | 1,228 | 22.1 |
| Law Other | 77.3 | 6.8 | 15.9 | 22.7 | 100 | 441 | 38.7 |
| Computer Science | 73.3 | 13.7 | 13.1 | 26.7 | 100 | 1,333 | 27.2 |
| Life Sciences | 61.0 | 13.6 | 25.3 | 39.0 | 100 | 1,997 | 12.7 |
| Mathematics | 66.8 | 15.4 | 17.8 | 33.2 | 100 | 208 | 8.6 |
| Chemistry | 68.8 | 17.5 | 13.8 | 31.3 | 100 | 160 | 11.8 |
| Physical Sciences | 76.9 | 7.1 | 16.0 | 23.1 | 100 | 156 | 16.7 |
| Geology | 79.2 | 10.9 | 16.1 | 27.1 | 106 | 192 | 11.4 |
| Veterinary Science | 90.7 | 5.8 | 3.5 | 9.3 | 100 | 172 | 1.3 |
| **Total %** | **76.2** | **8.6** | **15.1** | **23.8** | **100** | | **15.7** |
| **Total N** | **32,084** | **3,627** | **6,370** | **9,997** | | **42,081** | **5,027** |

† Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding. * Base figure is group in full-time employment.

# Graduate Starting Salaries

Table 3 shows the 2010 median annual starting salary for Australian resident new bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia as being $49,000 (up from $48,000 last year). This was 79.8 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (MAWE - $61,400 at the time of the AGS).

Probably reflecting the effects of the continued recruiter uncertainty in, what is hopefully, the backwash of the global financial crisis, this represents a notable downturn compared with the 2009 starting salary which was 83.0 per cent of MAWE and the highest that graduate starting salaries have been relative to MAWE since 2001.

Average weekly earnings for males are used as a constant for year-to-year analysis of change, and pre-date the availability of the female equivalent. This is discussed in the full *Graduate Salaries* reports.

In 2010, new male graduates earned a median salary of $50,000, which was 81.4 per cent of MAWE, down from 86.5 per cent in 2009. At the same time, new female graduates started work on a median salary of $48,000 which was 78.2 per cent of MAWE. Figure 2 shows graduate starting salaries for males, females and all graduates relative to MAWE since 1977, with a notable fall against MAWE between 2009 and 2010.

In dollar terms, the 2010 median starting salary for all graduates rose by $1,000 (or 2.1 per cent) from $48,000 in 2009 while the MAWE figure rose from $57,800 to $61,400 (or by 6.2 per cent) over the same period. The median salary for males did not change from $50,000 in 2009 while for females it increased by $1,000 from $47,000 (or 2.1 per cent).[4]

At $75,000, the median salary for dentistry graduates increased by $5,000 between 2009 and 2010 (although it remained unchanged between 2008 and 2009), and remained the highest for this group of graduates (see Tables 3 and 4). In a ranking based on starting salaries, they were followed by graduates from optometry ($70,000, up from $64,500 in 2009), engineering ($56,000 but down from $57,500 in 2009), medicine ($55,000, up from $54,000) and earth sciences ($54,000, unchanged from 2009).

Graduates in a number of fields must meet additional training requirements in order to gain professional registration which can sometimes result in relatively low starting salaries. As an example, pharmacy graduates (pre-registration) earned low starting salaries ($36,000) due to the further on-the-job training requirements they must meet for professional registration. Additional research has shown that their salaries grow very strongly upon registration[5].

Graduates in the art and design field earned $38,500, but can take longer to find relevant full-time employment in areas in which they were trained, due to the small number of available positions.

The largest rises between 2009 and 2010 were for optometry (up $5,500 from $64,500 in 2009 and up $10,000 from $60,000 in 2008), dentistry (up $5,000 from $70,000) and paramedical studies (up $3,000 from $47,000). In 2010, the fields of accounting, agricultural science, architecture & building, biological sciences, earth sciences, economics, business, humanities, mathematics and veterinary science experienced no increase. Engineering fell by $1,500 and law fell by $1,600.

Most fields of education have shown a high degree of consistency over the years covered by AGS data. For example, when ranked in terms of starting salaries in 2010, the top earning fields (dentistry, optometry, engineering, and medicine) have essentially remained unchanged since 2006 (see Table 4).

Females earned notably higher starting salaries than males in the fields of dentistry ($3,500 more) and physical sciences and psychology (both $2,500 more). They earned markedly less than males in the fields of architecture and building and earth sciences (both $5,000 less) and economics and business ($4,700 less).

Over the years, GCA research has suggested that overall differences in median starting salaries between males and females can be partly explained in terms of the differing enrolment profiles of male and female students. Male respondents have tended to be in the fields of education more highly ranked according to starting salary while females have tended to come from the middle ranked fields. An examination of the fields in the top five ranks in terms of starting salaries (see Tables 3 and 4; dentistry, optometry, engineering, medicine and earth sciences) shows that only 5.9 per cent of female respondents are within these fields, as opposed to 20.2 per cent of males. The fields occupying ranks six to ten (which include female dominated education and paramedical studies) account for 42.6 per cent of females and just 27.9 per cent of males.

While this initial analysis helps to explain part of the starting salary difference, there are many factors that interact to produce observed differences in median starting salaries. When males and females have studied in the same field, differing employment factors such as occupation, type and location of employer, or the hours worked, can also have an effect on earnings. Additionally, some fields of education used in this analysis are aggregations of smaller, related, but relatively heterogeneous fields, and this can lead to earnings differences within the aggregated field.

An analysis of the differences between starting salaries for males and females was undertaken for the report *Graduate Salaries 2009*.

4. See GradStats 2009 for relevant 2009 salaries figures.

5. Conducted by GCA for the Committee of Heads of Schools of Pharmacy in Australia and New Zealand.

**Table 3: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2010 ($,000).** Figures shown below salary figures indicate related number of responses. *

| | Aust. Govt | State Govt | Public Health | Total Govt | Prof. Practice. | Industry & Com. | Schools | Higher Ed. | Total Ed. | Total | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accounting | 51.0 | 47.0 | * | 50.0 | 45.0 | 45.0 | 49.0 | * | 49.0 | **45.0** | 45.0 | 45.0 |
| | 21 | 13 | * | 51 | 551 | 365 | 11 | * | 15 | **1,007** | 470 | 537 |
| Agricultural Science | * | * | * | 48.3 | * | 45.0 | * | * | * | **45.0** | 44.0 | 45.0 |
| | * | * | * | 13 | * | 99 | * | * | * | **137** | 66 | 71 |
| Architecture & Building | | * | | 53.0 | 35.0 | 45.0 | | * | * | **45.0** | 45.0 | 40.0 |
| | | * | | 44 | 119 | 186 | | * | * | **353** | 223 | 130 |
| Art & Design | * | * | | * | * | 36.0 | 50.0 | * | 50.0 | **38.5** | 39.0 | 38.0 |
| | * | * | | * | * | 179 | 49 | * | 50 | **257** | 85 | 172 |
| Biological Sciences | * | 46.9 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 42.0 | 40.0 | 53.0 | 50.0 | 52.0 | **45.0** | 44.5 | 45.0 |
| | * | 12 | 28 | 62 | 45 | 254 | 60 | 32 | 92 | **498** | 163 | 335 |
| Computer Science | 53.0 | * | * | 52.0 | 46.0 | 49.5 | 50.5 | 50.0 | 50.0 | **50.0** | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| | 21 | * | * | 42 | 20 | 249 | 18 | 13 | 31 | **361** | 311 | 50 |
| Dentistry | | * | 63.0 | 61.0 | 80.0 | * | | * | * | **75.0** | 71.5 | 75.0 |
| | | * | 30 | 31 | 331 | * | | * | * | **71** | 26 | 45 |
| Earth Sciences | * | * | * | 50.4 | * | 55.0 | * | * | * | **54.0** | 56.0 | 51.0 |
| | * | * | * | 14 | * | 71 | * | * | * | **97** | 65 | 32 |
| Economics, Business | 52.0 | 48.0 | 46.5 | 50.0 | 46.0 | 43.0 | 41.0 | 47.7 | 45.5 | **45.0** | 47.2 | 42.5 |
| | 88 | 43 | 14 | 196 | 229 | 1,467 | 29 | 28 | 57 | **2,072** | 843 | 1,229 |
| Education | * | * | * | 51.0 | * | 43.0 | 53.0 | * | 53.0 | **53.0** | 53.0 | 53.0 |
| | * | * | * | 14 | * | 66 | 1,180 | * | 1,186 | **1,305** | 223 | 1,082 |
| Engineering | 56.0 | 54.4 | * | 55.7 | 55.0 | 57.0 | * | 50.8 | 50.4 | **56.0** | 56.0 | 57.0 |
| | 66 | 33 | * | 135 | 298 | 641 | * | 13 | 16 | **1,117** | 929 | 188 |
| Humanities | 49.9 | 50.0 | 46.0 | 49.6 | 50.0 | 39.0 | 53.7 | 46.5 | 53.0 | **42.0** | 45.0 | 42.0 |
| | 70 | 32 | 13 | 155 | 96 | 573 | 94 | 28 | 117 | **1,039** | 261 | 778 |
| Law | 51.4 | 55.0 | * | 51.0 | 47.5 | 47.0 | * | * | * | **48.4** | 50.0 | 47.4 |
| | 27 | 11 | * | 72 | 184 | 79 | * | * | * | **360** | 104 | 256 |
| Mathematics | * | * | | * | * | 52.0 | * | * | * | **52.0** | 52.0 | 52.0 |
| | * | * | | * | * | 43 | * | * | * | **67** | 37 | 30 |
| Medicine | * | * | 55.0 | 55.0 | | 41.0 | | * | * | **55.0** | 55.5 | 55.0 |
| | * | * | 306 | 308 | | 17 | | * | * | **332** | 118 | 214 |
| Optometry | | | | | 70.0 | * | | | | **70.0** | 70.0 | 70.0 |
| | | | | | 29 | * | | | | **33** | 13 | 20 |
| Paramedical Studies | * | 52.4 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 48.0 | 50.0 | 50.6 | 50.0 | **50.0** | 50.0 | 49.5 |
| | * | 16 | 1,369 | 1,401 | 228 | 477 | 37 | 14 | 51 | **2,287** | 314 | 1,973 |
| Pharmacy (pre-reg) | | | 48.0 | 48.0 | * | 35.0 | | | | **36.0** | 35.0 | 36.0 |
| | | | 89 | 89 | * | 267 | | | | **361** | 132 | 229 |
| Physical Sciences | 48.0 | * | | 50.0 | * | 50.0 | 52.5 | * | 52.0 | **50.0** | 50.0 | 52.5 |
| | 15 | * | | 25 | * | 46 | 12 | * | 19 | **101** | 61 | 40 |
| Psychology | 49.0 | * | 51.4 | 50.0 | 44.0 | 43.5 | 54.0 | 52.0 | 53.0 | **47.7** | 45.5 | 48.0 |
| | 10 | * | 22 | 56 | 19 | 115 | 33 | 10 | 43 | **290** | 38 | 252 |
| Social Sciences | 49.0 | 45.0 | | 49.1 | * | 40.0 | * | * | 47.5 | **43.7** | 44.0 | 43.7 |
| | 12 | 13 | | 46 | * | 52 | * | * | 12 | **130** | 40 | 90 |
| Social Work | * | * | 51.0 | 51.0 | * | 37.0 | * | | * | **46.9** | * | 46.9 |
| | * | * | 21 | 34 | * | 12 | * | | * | **140** | 8 | 132 |
| Veterinary Science | * | * | * | * | 45.0 | * | | | | **45.0** | * | 44.0 |
| | * | * | * | * | 62 | * | | | | **71** | 9 | 62 |
| **All Fields** | **51.4** | **51.0** | **50.0** | **50.0** | **48.0** | **45.0** | **53.0** | **50.0** | **53.0** | **49.0** | **50.0** | **48.0** |
| | **364** | **226** | **1,904** | **2,804** | **1,953** | **5,268** | **1,549** | **172** | **1,721** | **12,486** | **4,539** | **7,947** |
| Males | 52.0 | 54.0 | 51.8 | 52.0 | 50.0 | 48.5 | 52.0 | 50.0 | 52.0 | **50.0** | | |
| | 192 | 88 | 322 | 745 | 867 | 2,379 | 286 | 63 | 349 | **4,539** | | |
| Females | 50.3 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 46.0 | 42.0 | 53.0 | 48.0 | 53.0 | **48.0** | | |
| | 172 | 138 | 1,582 | 2,059 | 1,086 | 2,889 | 1,263 | 109 | 1,372 | **7,947** | | |

* Salaries based on fewer than 10 cases not shown. 'Total Government', 'Total Education' and 'Total' columns include cases not shown in related constituent columns.

**Table 4: Fields of education ranked according to level of starting salary, 2006-10 (= denotes equal ranking).**

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dentistry | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Optometry | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Engineering | 4 | =4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Medicine | 3 | 3 | =4 | =4 | 4 |
| Earth Sciences | 5 | =4 | =4 | =4 | 5 |
| Education | 6 | =6 | =7 | 7 | 6 |
| Mathematics | 7 | =6 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Computer Science | =8 | 10 | 10 | 9 | =8 |
| Paramedical Studies | 11 | 11 | =11 | 11 | =8 |
| Physical Sciences | =12 | 12 | =7 | 10 | =8 |
| Law | =8 | 8 | =7 | 8 | 11 |
| Psychology | =12 | 13 | 15 | =12 | 12 |
| Social work | =8 | 9 | =11 | =12 | 13 |
| Accounting | =19 | 15 | =13 | =12 | =14 |
| Agricultural Science | 16 | =15 | 17 | =12 | =14 |
| Architecture & Building | 17 | =15 | 16 | =12 | =14 |
| Biological Sciences | =12 | 14 | =13 | =12 | =14 |
| Economics, Business | =12 | =15 | 18 | =12 | =14 |
| Veterinary Science | 18 | =15 | =20 | =12 | =14 |
| Social Sciences | 21 | 20 | 19 | =20 | 20 |
| Humanities | =19 | 21 | =20 | =20 | 21 |
| Art & Design | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| Pharmacy (pre-reg) | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |

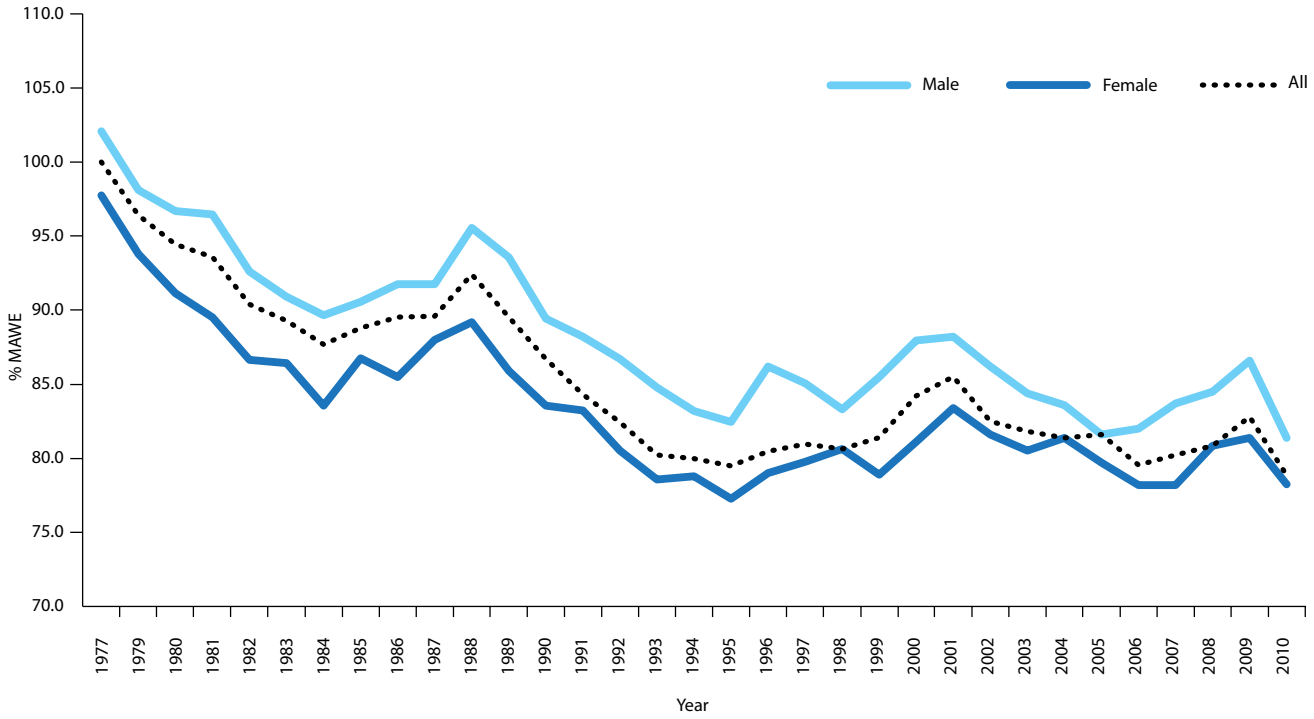


**Figure 2: Male, female and all graduates' median starting salaries relative to the annual rate of full-time male average weekly earnings, 1977-2010.**

# Graduate Satisfaction

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) has been in use since 1993 and is an instrument developed to measure graduates' satisfaction with their study experiences. Broad satisfaction was at a high level in 2010 (93.2 per cent), and correspondingly dissatisfaction was low. These figures are similar to previous results over the past decade. The broad satisfaction figure represents the percentage of respondents answering '3', '4' or '5' on a five-point scale (with the fifth point indicating highest satisfaction).

# Job Search Strategies

Of those graduates that had looked for and found full-time employment, almost one-quarter (24.7 per cent) first found out about their current job via an advertisement on the internet (see Table 5). While this figure reflects the importance of scouring online vacancies in today's job market, it is notable that three-quarters of graduates in full-time employment did not first find out about their employment via this method. Demonstrating the diversity in how graduates find out about their full-time jobs, Table 5 suggests job seekers need to cast their nets wide. It should also be noted that this doesn't necessarily indicate that online advertisements are the most effective way to find a graduate job, but simply that this was the single most common way in which graduates in full-time employment first learned of their current job.

Of the 12 job search methods identified in Table 5, over half of the graduates in full-time employment learned of their current employment first through one of three strategies: advertisement on the internet (24.7 per cent), family or friends (15.1 per cent) and university or college careers services (10.4 per cent).

**Table 5: How graduates in full-time employment first found out about their employment: bachelor degree graduates who had actively sought employment in the year prior to the AGS, and who were in full-time employment at the time of the AGS, 2010 (%)**

| | Total Cases | % |
|---|---|---|
| Advertisement on the internet | 4,694 | 24.7 |
| Family or friends | 2,872 | 15.1 |
| University or college careers service | 1,976 | 10.4 |
| Approached employer directly | 1,882 | 9.9 |
| Other | 1,307 | 6.9 |
| Work contacts or networks | 1,199 | 6.3 |
| Approached by an employer | 1,154 | 6.1 |
| Advertisement in a newspaper or other print media | 1,052 | 5.5 |
| Careers fair or information session | 1,003 | 5.3 |
| Other university or college source (such as faculties or lecturers) | 931 | 4.9 |
| Employment agency | 624 | 3.3 |
| Via résumé posted on the internet | 285 | 1.5 |
| **Total** | **18,979** | **100.0** |

# Need more information?

Further details about graduate destinations, graduate salaries and the CEQ can be found in the forthcoming reports *Graduate Destinations 2010*, *Graduate Salaries 2010*, *Postgraduate Destinations 2010*, *Graduate Course Experience 2010* and *Postgraduate Research Experience 2010*, which will be released progressively during 2011. To order copies, please call GCA on (03) 9605 3700 or visit our online shop at www.graduatecareers.com.au.

GCA conducts a number of national surveys in the graduate area. These include the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS), a national survey of the experiences and outcomes of university graduates; the Beyond Graduation Survey – a follow-up to the AGS three years after course completion; University & Beyond, a survey of the expectations and perceptions of higher education students; and the Graduate Outlook Survey, a study of experiences and plans of graduate employers in Australia and New Zealand.

More detailed information on graduate outcomes can be found in GCA publications at www.graduatecareers.com.au.

**You can also visit our online database at www.gradsonline.com.au or contact Graduate Careers Australia on +61 3 9605 3700 or email research@graduatecareers.com.au.**