



## Uni Graduates:

### *Work, Salaries, Study and Course Satisfaction*

The *Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA)* conducts an annual survey of new graduates shortly after the completion of their studies.

The *Graduate Destination Survey* looks at how many graduates are in work or are seeking employment, what they are earning, and whether or not they are studying for another qualification. The survey also gathers information as to how satisfied graduates were with particular aspects of their course.

*This publication provides information about recently qualified bachelor degree graduates for students who are considering university, their parents, and the secondary school community. A bachelor degree is an entry-level university qualification and is usually the first qualification after secondary school.*

## 2002 Graduates At A Glance:

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2002, 81.3 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees.
- A further 11.2 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment.
- A smaller group, 7.5 per cent, were not working and were still looking for full-time employment.
- These figures represent a slight fall in employment prospects for new graduates in 2002 after a period of improvement and consolidation between 1999 and 2001.
- Over 24 per cent of respondents were undertaking further full-time study after completing their bachelor degree.
- The median annual starting salary (i.e. a graduate's salary after graduating and obtaining his or her first full-time job) was \$35,500.
- Overall satisfaction with university courses as measured by the *Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)* remains at a high level, with the broad satisfaction figure coming in at 89 per cent.

\*The word 'median' is used in this publication and is defined as the middle value in a frequency distribution, below and above which lie values with equal total frequencies. It is similar to, but not the same as, an average.

## Employment

The following section gives an overview of graduate employment over the last few years. (Tables 1 and 1a)

*Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, 2000-2002 (%).*

	Available for full-time employment (see Table 1a)	In full-time study	In part-time or casual employment, but not seeking full-time employment	Not working, seeking part-time or casual employment only	Unavailable for full-time study or full-time employment
<b>Male</b>					
2000	68.0	25.2	3.1	0.3	3.3
2001	68.8	24.7	3.7	0.3	2.5
2002	67.6	25.2	3.3	0.4	3.5
<b>Female</b>					
2000	63.8	23.6	7.7	0.8	4.2
2001	65.8	22.7	7.5	0.8	3.3
2002	64.1	23.4	7.6	0.8	4.1
<b>Persons</b>					
2000	65.4	24.2	5.9	0.6	3.9
2001	67.0	23.4	6.0	0.6	2.9
2002	65.4	24.1	6.0	0.6	3.9

*Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 2000-2002 (%).*

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment
<b>Male</b>				
2000	84.5	7.6	7.9	15.5
2001	83.2	8.5	8.3	16.8
2002	81.2	9.3	9.5	18.8
<b>Female</b>				
2000	83.0	6.1	10.9	17.0
2001	82.9	6.1	11.0	17.1
2002	81.3	6.4	12.3	18.7
<b>Persons</b>				
2000	83.6	6.7	9.7	16.4
2001	83.0	7.0	10.0	17.0
2002	81.3	7.5	11.2	18.7

For people leaving secondary school this year, and starting a degree next year, it will be around three or four years (the average time it takes to complete a degree) before they will be looking for full-time employment. While current graduate employment levels aren't immediately relevant to anyone finishing school now, they are certainly relevant to anyone about to finish university.

However, it's a good idea for all university students to keep an eye on graduate employment levels as they pursue their studies to enable them to make informed course, subject and job search choices.

It's also worth remembering that graduates are less likely to be unemployed (for any length of time) than are non-graduates. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that graduates have an unemployment rate half that of non-graduates.

## Salaries

The median annual starting salary for new bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time job was \$35,500. This compares favourably with the annual salary of the average Australian worker which was \$42,900.

As the tables on page 2 indicate, of bachelor degree graduates who look for full-time work when they finish their degrees, more than eight in every ten have found it within four months (when the survey is completed). Of the remaining graduates, the statistics show that about half were in part-time work while looking for full-time work, and the other half were not working.

Research suggests that these two (out of ten) find full-time work quite quickly, and that in the long term, unemployment is not a great concern for university graduates.

Another statistic worth noting is that while females were as likely as males to have been seeking full-time employment (18.7 per cent compared with 18.8 per cent), they were more likely to have some employment (either part-time or casual) while seeking full-time work.

## Further Study

Postgraduate study means doing another qualification after an initial degree. Further study can mean a postgraduate qualification or it can mean another qualification but not at postgraduate level, for example, an honours year at the end of, but within, a bachelor degree.

Postgraduate qualifications include awards like a graduate diploma, masters degree or a doctorate, which is also known as a PhD. Further study is usually

Overall, starting salaries for male graduates are higher than those for female graduates. In 2002, salaries for females were 94.6 per cent of males' salaries, but some of this difference is due to the different study choices that males and females make.

undertaken to improve work prospects, to gain a particular type or level of skill, or to gain entry into professional employment.

In 2002, almost one in four new graduates continued in full-time study after their first degree, and this was slightly up on the previous year.

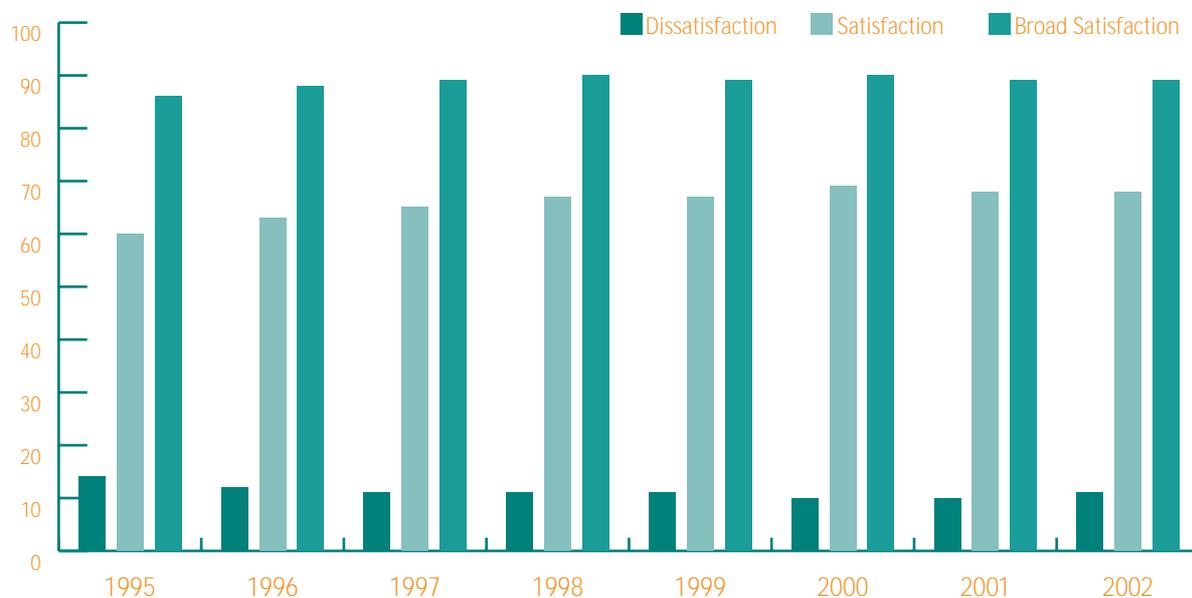
Males were slightly more likely than females (25.2 per cent compared with 23.4 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2002.

## Graduate Satisfaction

The *Course Experience Questionnaire* measures bachelor degree graduates' overall satisfaction with their courses.

The graph below shows that satisfaction levels are high, and that dissatisfaction has been low since 1995.

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction with course, bachelor degree graduates, 1995-2002.



## Fields of Study

Table 2 sets out some *GDS* figures for various fields of study. A field of study is defined as a discipline, or an area of knowledge and information. For example, mathematics, law and education are all individual 'fields of study'. The information on fields of study is usually of great interest to people considering university, as they can get a feel for the employment outcomes in the fields that interest them.

It's important to obtain information regarding tertiary education from areas other than these statistics, as they provide a snapshot of tertiary education but not the whole picture. For example, the reason medical graduates have high employment levels is that they must serve an internship in

a public hospital before they qualify for full professional registration, and therefore automatically have jobs to go to. The reason that architecture and pharmacy graduates have relatively low starting salaries is because they must also complete further training requirements in their first job before they qualify for full professional registration. They go on to higher salaries in subsequent years. These facts are not represented in the figures from the *Graduate Destination Survey*.

Secondary school students should discuss post-secondary education issues with their teachers, careers advisers, parents, friends, and older students, and should also attend university course information days.

Table 2: Employment, further study, starting salaries, 2002.

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Further full-time study %	Median starting salary
Agriculture	74.4	10.7	14.9	23.3	\$32,000
Architecture	84.5	4.7	10.8	28.5	\$28,000
Building	87.6	4.5	7.9	23.2	\$33,000
Urb & Reg Planning	93.8	3.1	3.1	16.3	\$35,000
Humanities	67.1	13.1	19.8	35.9	\$31,445
Languages	71.3	11.6	17.0	45.7	\$33,000
Visual/Performing Arts	56.9	17.1	26.0	38.5	\$30,000
Social Sciences	71.2	10.7	18.1	34.5	\$33,750
Psychology	65.4	14.1	20.5	48.9	\$34,000
Social Work	77.2	7.8	15.0	8.9	\$35,000
Business Studies	78.9	8.3	12.9	17.5	\$33,000
Accounting	90.7	5.9	3.4	10.6	\$34,000
Economics	86.7	6.6	6.6	29.0	\$36,000
Education, Initial	83.2	2.9	13.8	8.5	\$38,000
Education Post/Other	82.3	5.0	12.8	5.6	\$38,000
Aeronautical Engineering	82.9	11.4	5.7	16.5	\$42,500
Chemical Engineering	89.2	7.8	3.0	29.4	\$40,500
Civil Engineering	91.1	7.1	1.8	11.5	\$37,800
Electrical Engineering	83.3	11.0	5.6	17.6	\$41,750
Electron/Computer Engineering	74.7	16.4	9.0	22.6	\$41,000
Mechanical Engineering	81.5	9.2	9.2	19.3	\$40,000
Mining Engineering	90.9	5.2	3.9	11.5	\$50,000
Other Engineering	83.5	9.6	6.9	15.8	\$39,000
Surveying	92.6	4.6	2.8	10.9	\$36,000
Dentistry	97.5	0.0	2.5	6.5	\$52,000
Health, Other	78.9	7.2	13.9	24.5	\$35,548
Nursing, Initial	97.4	0.8	1.8	6.5	\$34,000
Nursing, Post-initial	97.2	0.3	2.5	5.0	\$34,500
Pharmacy	100.0	0.0	0.0	7.8	\$26,000
Medicine	98.6	0.6	0.8	17.6	\$40,000
Rehabilitation	92.4	2.1	5.5	11.9	\$37,000
Law	92.7	4.4	3.0	19.0	\$37,500
Law, Other	95.5	1.4	3.1	10.9	\$39,500
Computer Science	70.5	16.4	13.1	21.2	\$39,000
Life Sciences	69.6	11.4	19.0	48.4	\$34,940
Mathematics	72.6	16.0	11.4	44.8	\$37,000
Chemistry	77.0	10.9	12.0	54.1	\$35,250
Physics	59.8	18.0	22.1	53.0	\$37,178
Geology	75.3	6.5	18.2	45.0	\$38,000
Veterinary Science	96.7	2.6	0.7	7.1	\$34,642
<b>Total %</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>\$35,500</b>
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>31,715</b>	<b>2,941</b>	<b>4,362</b>	<b>14,367</b>	

## Occupations

The following section lists the types of full-time work graduates from the various fields of study were doing at the time of the *GDS*. The most common occupations, as reported by the new graduates, are listed after the field of study. The occupations are listed in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned by the graduates,

i.e. if 'counsellor' is mentioned first, then it was mentioned most often by the respondents, and so on.

Don't be put off by the regular occurrence of the occupation 'clerk'. It often represents a trainee position in a field the graduate is interested in, and which can lead to more advanced positions later.

**Agricultural Science** – agricultural or environmental scientist; clerk; manager; scientific officer; business professional; manual worker; farmer; other professional

**Architecture** – architect; building technical officer; designer; manager; clerk

**Building** – manager; building technical officer; designer; quantity surveyor; other building or engineering professional; clerk; business professional

**Urban and Regional Planning** – urban and regional planner; other building, engineering or science professional; manager, clerk

**Humanities** – clerk; manager; business professional; other professional; journalist; teacher; public relations

**Languages** – clerk; teacher; business professional; manager; other professional

**Visual and Performing Arts** – clerk; designer or illustrator; manager; teacher; business or other professional; musician or composer; visual or performing artist (other); film, radio, TV, and stage

**Social Science** – business or other professional; clerk; manager; welfare or counselling; science or health professional; teacher

**Psychology** – clerk; business professional; manager; welfare or counselling; psychologist; other professional; teacher; health or science professional

**Social Work** – social worker; welfare or counselling; clerk; manager

**Business Studies** – clerk; manager; business professional; accounting; marketing; other professional or para-professional; personnel; computing professional

**Accounting** – accountant; business and other professional; clerk; manager

**Economics** – business professional; clerk; manager; other professional; accounting; economist

**Education (initial teacher training)** – primary teacher; secondary teacher; pre-primary teacher; other teacher; manager; clerk

**Education (post-initial teacher training)** – secondary teacher; primary teacher; other teacher; manager; pre-primary teacher; other professional

**Aeronautical Engineering** – engineer; manager; other professional

**Chemical Engineering** – other engineer; chemical engineer; mechanical engineer; science professional; manager; engineering technical officer

**Civil Engineering** – civil engineer; other engineer; manager; engineering technical officer; business professional

**Electrical Engineering** – computing professional; electrical engineer; other engineer; business professional; manager

**Electronic/Computer Engineering** – computing professional; electrical engineer; other engineer; business professional; manager

**Mechanical Engineering** – mechanical engineer; other engineer; manager; engineering technical officer; computing professional

**Mining Engineering** – mining engineer; other engineer and related

**Other Engineering** – engineer; manager; business professional; mining engineer; computing professional

**Surveying** – surveyor; other science engineering or building professional; other professional

**Dentistry** – dentist

**Health Sciences** – medical imaging professional; para-professional; clerk; medical or scientific technical officer; manager; health professional; other professional; podiatrist; optometrist; science professional; medical records administrator; nurse; dietitian

**Nursing** – nurse

**Pharmacy** – pharmacist

**Medicine** – medical practitioner

**Rehabilitation Studies** – physiotherapist; occupational therapist; speech pathologist; other health or science professional

**Law** – lawyer; legal clerk; business or other professional; manager; accountant

**Law (other)** – police; lawyer; legal clerk; manager; business or other professional

**Computing** – computer professional; business professional; clerk; manager

**Biological and Life Sciences** – clerk; medical or science officer; manager; business or other professional; environmental or life scientist; health professional; teacher; other scientific or engineering professional

**Mathematics** – business professional; clerk; computing professional; manager; other science or engineering professional; teacher; organisations analyst; mathematician or statistician; other professional; actuary

**Chemistry** – medical or scientific technical officer; chemist (not pharmacist); other scientific or engineering professional; business professional; clerk; manager

**Physical Science** – computing professional; scientific or engineering professional; other professional; clerk; physicist or geophysicist; manager

**Geology and Earth Sciences** – geologist or geophysicist; clerk; medical or scientific professional; environmental scientist; other professional

**Veterinary Science** – veterinarian

## The Last Word

Entering a university or college usually requires much thought and research on behalf of the secondary school student. The choices you make about your university education shouldn't be taken lightly but the rewards are immense and include personal growth, a fulfilling career with strong employment prospects and high earnings potential.

Consult careers references at your school, university careers advisers, and investigate student websites, especially [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au) and *GradsOnline* at [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au).

**More information:** School principals, teachers, careers advisers, students, and parents can purchase the reports *Graduate Destination Survey 2001*, *Graduate Starting Salaries 2001*, and the *Course Experience Questionnaire 2001* from the *Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA)*.

Ph. 03 8344 9333, Fax. 03 9347 7298, Email: [info@gradlink.edu.au](mailto:info@gradlink.edu.au), or write to GCCA, PO Box 28, Parkville, VIC, 3052

For further information on graduate employment, graduate destination statistics, and the GCCA, visit the *GradsOnline* website at [www.gradlink.edu.au](http://www.gradlink.edu.au).

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