



The Graduate Careers Council of Australia's *Graduate Destination Survey* (GDS) is a study of the activities of new university graduates around four months after the completion of their qualifications. In the *2003 GDS*, new graduates who completed the requirements for their qualifications in the calendar year 2002 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, 62.7 per cent of this group responded to the survey. (Figures for overseas residents are discussed in the full *GDS* report, to be published in the first half of 2004).

For further information on graduate employment, graduate destination statistics and the GCCA, visit the *gradsonline* website at www.gradlink.edu.au.

Graduates in 2003:

Work, Study, Salaries and Course Satisfaction — Main Points

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2003, 80.1 per cent (81.3 per cent last year) were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees. While the percentage fell slightly, the actual number of graduates in full-time employment rose from 31,715 to 34,999.
- A further 12.1 per cent (11.2 per cent last year) were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment.
- An additional 7.8 per cent (7.5 per cent last year) were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey.
- These figures represent a continued levelling-off of employment prospects for new graduates, first seen in 2002, after a period of improvement and consolidation between 1999 and 2001.
- More than one in five respondents, or 22.8 per cent (24.1 per cent last year) were undertaking further full-time study after completing their qualification. Males were more likely than females to have continued in full-time study.
- The median annual starting salary for bachelor degree graduates in their first full-time employment was \$37,000 (\$35,500 last year). This was 82.0 per cent of average earnings, down from 82.7 per cent last year, 85.8 per cent in 2001, and 84.2 per cent in 2000 but up on 81.6 per cent in 1999.
- Males earned a starting salary of \$38,000 (up from \$37,000 last year) and females earned \$36,300 (up from \$35,000 last year).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the *Course Experience Questionnaire* (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 89.8 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

The results of the 2003 Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) show that, of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 80.1 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, and a further 12.1 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment.

An additional 7.8 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment within four months of completing their qualifications (see Table 1a)

These figures represent a continued levelling-off of employment prospects for new graduates, first seen in 2002, after a period of improvement and consolidation between 1999 and 2001.

Generally, between one-fifth and one-quarter of respondents elect to continue in further full-time study. In 2003, 22.8 per cent did so, down from 24.1 per cent last year and 23.4 per cent in 2001 (see Table 1). These figures include those proceeding to honours years and higher degrees.

A further 5.7 per cent of respondents were in part-time or casual work and were not seeking full-time employment (6.0 per cent in 2002), while 0.6 per cent were not working and seeking part-time or casual employment only (0.6 per cent in 2002). These figures have remained fairly stable over the last five years.

Of those graduates seeking full-time employment, females (80.2 per cent — see Table 1a) were slightly more likely than males (79.8 per cent) to have found it by the time of the survey.

Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2001-2003.

	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 full-time employment %	Total cases	Total %
Males							
2001	68.8	24.7	3.7	0.3	2.5	22,056	100
2002	67.6	25.2	3.3	0.4	3.5	22,894	100
2003	69.1	23.5	3.4	0.4	3.6	24,923	100
Females							
2001	65.8	22.7	7.5	0.8	3.3	35,732	100
2002	64.1	23.4	7.6	0.8	4.1	36,389	100
2003	65.8	22.3	7.1	0.8	4.0	39,838	100
Persons							
2001	67.0	23.4	6.0	0.6	2.9	57,937	100
2002	65.4	24.1	6.0	0.6	3.9	59,629	100
2003	67.0	22.8	5.7	0.6	3.9	65,158	100

Total persons might not equal males plus females as some respondents did not identify sex.

Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 2001-2003.

	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 GDS %
Males							
2001	83.2	8.5	8.3	16.8	100	15,170	19.5
2002	81.2	9.3	9.5	18.8	100	15,477	19.7
2003	79.8	9.6	10.6	20.2	100	17,226	17.7
Females							
2001	82.9	6.1	11.0	17.1	100	23,516	12.8
2002	81.3	6.4	12.3	18.7	100	23,320	12.8
2003	80.2	6.7	13.1	19.8	100	26,192	12.2
Persons							
2001	83.0	7.0	10.0	17.0	100	38,794	15.4
2002	81.3	7.5	11.2	18.7	100	39,018	15.5
2003	80.1	7.8	12.1	19.9	100	43,689	14.5

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. * Base figure is that group in full-time employment.

Females were slightly less likely than males to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey (19.8 per cent as opposed to 20.2 per cent), but were notably less likely than males (6.7 per cent compared with 9.6 per cent) to have been without any work while seeking full-time employment.

Females were much more likely than males (13.1 per cent compared with 10.6 per cent) to have been in part-time or casual employment while seeking a full-time position. This difference (regularly seen in GDS figures) is likely to be a reflection of females' numerical dominance in fields of study such as teaching and nursing, in which there are strong opportunities for professional part-time employment.

Males (23.5 per cent) were slightly more likely than females (22.3 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2003 (see Table 1).

Table 1a indicates that 14.5 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position in their final year of study. This figure is calculated as at 1 May in the final year of study and a proportion of these respondents were actually in that full-time employment for a longer period of their study.

Figure 1 demonstrates how employment levels have fluctuated slightly in recent years, with prospects remaining below the levels experienced in the mid-to-late 1980s.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment by field of study. Labour market factors peculiar to some fields of study 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.



Figure 1: Bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment; percentage in full-time employment (1982-2003), percentage working part-time while seeking full-time employment (1992-2003), percentage not working while seeking full-time employment (1992-2003).

Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of study, 2003.

	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 GDS %
Agriculture	73.5	10.7	15.8	26.5	100	892	14.3
Architecture	85.4	6.1	8.6	14.6	100	478	15.2
Building	83.4	7.4	9.2	16.6	100	338	24.1
Urb & Reg Planning	93.2	3.4	3.4	6.8	100	147	14.6
Humanities	67.3	13.1	19.6	32.7	100	3,181	19.0
Languages	73.1	10.1	16.8	26.9	100	654	16.5
Visual/Performing Arts	54.2	15.6	30.2	45.8	100	1,358	5.8
Social Sciences	69.3	13.7	17.0	30.7	100	476	20.3
Psychology	67.3	12.1	20.6	32.7	100	1,080	15.5
Social Work	79.5	8.7	11.9	20.5	100	901	14.5
Business Studies	76.9	8.8	14.3	23.1	100	6,163	20.4
Accounting	87.5	7.4	5.1	12.5	100	2,997	28.1
Economics	81.8	7.7	10.4	18.2	100	595	11.7
Education, Initial	82.7	2.7	14.6	17.3	100	5,533	10.8
Education Post/Other	75.9	6.9	17.2	24.1	100	87	30.3
Aeronautical Engineering	83.9	8.1	8.1	16.1	100	124	3.8
Chemical Engineering	87.6	6.2	6.2	12.4	100	177	3.2
Civil Engineering	94.3	4.1	1.7	5.7	100	542	12.1
Electrical Engineering	82.1	12.3	5.6	17.9	100	358	21.1
Electron/Comp Eng	73.5	16.4	10.1	26.5	100	483	14.1
Mechanical Engineering	87.2	8.0	4.8	12.8	100	476	13.3
Mining Engineering	94.1	5.9	0.0	5.9	100	85	7.5
Other Engineering	86.4	7.4	6.2	13.6	100	339	14.3
Surveying	93.4	4.1	2.5	6.6	100	121	19.5
Dentistry	94.2	0.6	5.2	5.8	100	154	0.7
Health, Other	79.7	6.6	13.7	20.3	100	1,630	18.1
Nursing, Initial	97.5	0.4	2.1	2.5	100	2,625	5.2
Nursing, Post-initial	97.1	0.3	2.5	2.9	100	315	6.2
Pharmacy (pre-reg)	99.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	100	402	0.3
Medicine	98.0	1.1	0.9	2.0	100	915	0.6
Rehabilitation	91.6	2.4	6.0	8.4	100	1,011	1.1
Law	88.6	6.6	4.8	11.4	100	1,170	13.8
Law, Other	94.6	1.9	3.5	5.4	100	2,109	14.7
Computer Science	68.1	16.4	15.6	31.9	100	2,687	20.3
Life Sciences	68.6	11.7	19.7	31.4	100	2,152	9.7
Mathematics	67.7	17.3	14.9	32.3	100	248	13.1
Chemistry	75.7	14.1	10.2	24.3	100	255	9.8
Physics	66.7	20.3	13.0	33.3	100	138	16.3
Geology	80.1	6.2	13.7	19.9	100	146	7.7
Veterinary Science	92.5	3.4	4.1	7.5	100	147	0.0
Total %	80.1	7.8	12.1	19.9	100		14.5
Total Number	34,999	3,414	5,276	8,690	43,689	43,689	

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

For example, medical graduates, of whom 98.0 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.

Other fields with high proportions in full-time employment at the time of the survey were pre-registration pharmacy (99.5 per cent), initial nursing education (97.5 per cent), and post-initial nursing education (97.1 per cent).

Respondents in visual and performing arts, physics, psychology, humanities, mathematics, computer science, life sciences and social science were most likely to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the GDS.

While the national employment figure fell slightly (1.2 percentage points) between 2002 and 2003, some fields of study experienced a notable improvement, including physics (up by 6.9 percentage points following an 18.0 percentage point fall between 2001 and 2003), mechanical engineering (up 5.7 percentage points), geology (up by 4.8 percentage points), and civil and mining engineering (both up by 3.2 percentage points).

Several other fields also enjoyed improved employment prospects. However, the percentage of respondents in full-time employment fell markedly in some fields between 2002 and 2003. Education (post-initial training) fell by 6.4 percentage points, and economics and mathematics both fell by 4.9 percentage points.

Respondents from visual and performing arts (30.2 per cent) and psychology (20.6 per cent) were the most likely to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment.

Those from physics (20.3 per cent), mathematics (17.3 per cent), and computer science and electronic and computer engineering (both 16.4 per cent, the same as last year) were the most likely to have been without work while seeking full-time employment.

Table 3: Annual rate of average weekly earnings (AWE) and median graduate starting salaries (GSS), and relativity, 1977-2003 (\$,000).

	AWE	GSS	GSS % AWE
1977	9.6	9.6	100.0
1979	11.3	10.9	96.5
1980	12.5	11.8	94.4
1981	14.1	13.2	93.6
1982	16.5	14.9	90.3
1983	17.8	15.9	89.3
1984	19.6	17.2	87.8
1985	20.5	18.2	88.8
1986	22.1	19.8	89.6
1987	23.3	20.9	89.7
1988	24.9	23.0	92.4
1989	26.8	24.0	89.6
1990	28.7	24.9	86.8
1991	30.0	25.3	84.3
1992	31.1	25.7	82.6
1993	31.8	25.5	80.2
1994	32.5	26.0	80.0
1995	33.9	27.0	79.6
1996	34.8	28.0	80.5
1997	35.7	29.0	81.2
1998	37.2	30.0	80.6
1999	38.0	31.0	81.6
2000	39.2	33.0	84.2
2001	40.8	35.0	85.8
2002	42.9	35.5	82.7
2003	45.1	37.0	82.0

*Data from 1978 were incompatible with those from other years, and have been excluded from this analysis.

Many graduates were already in their full-time employment while studying. Respondents from education (post-initial training – 30.3 per cent) and accounting (28.1 per cent) were most likely to have been in full-time employment in their final year of study and still with that employer at the time of the survey.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures for May 2002 show that, in the population as a whole, 2.9 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were unemployed. *GDS* employment figures differ from ABS figures in that the *GDS* figures separate 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.

Graduate Starting Salaries

In 2003, the median graduate starting salary for bachelor degree graduates in their first full-time employment was \$37,000 (up from \$35,500 last year). This was 82.0 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings (\$45,100 at the time), which was down from 82.7 per cent in 2002, 85.8 per cent in 2001 and 84.2 per cent in 2000.

Graduate starting salaries as a percentage of average weekly earnings remain below levels experienced during the 1980s (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

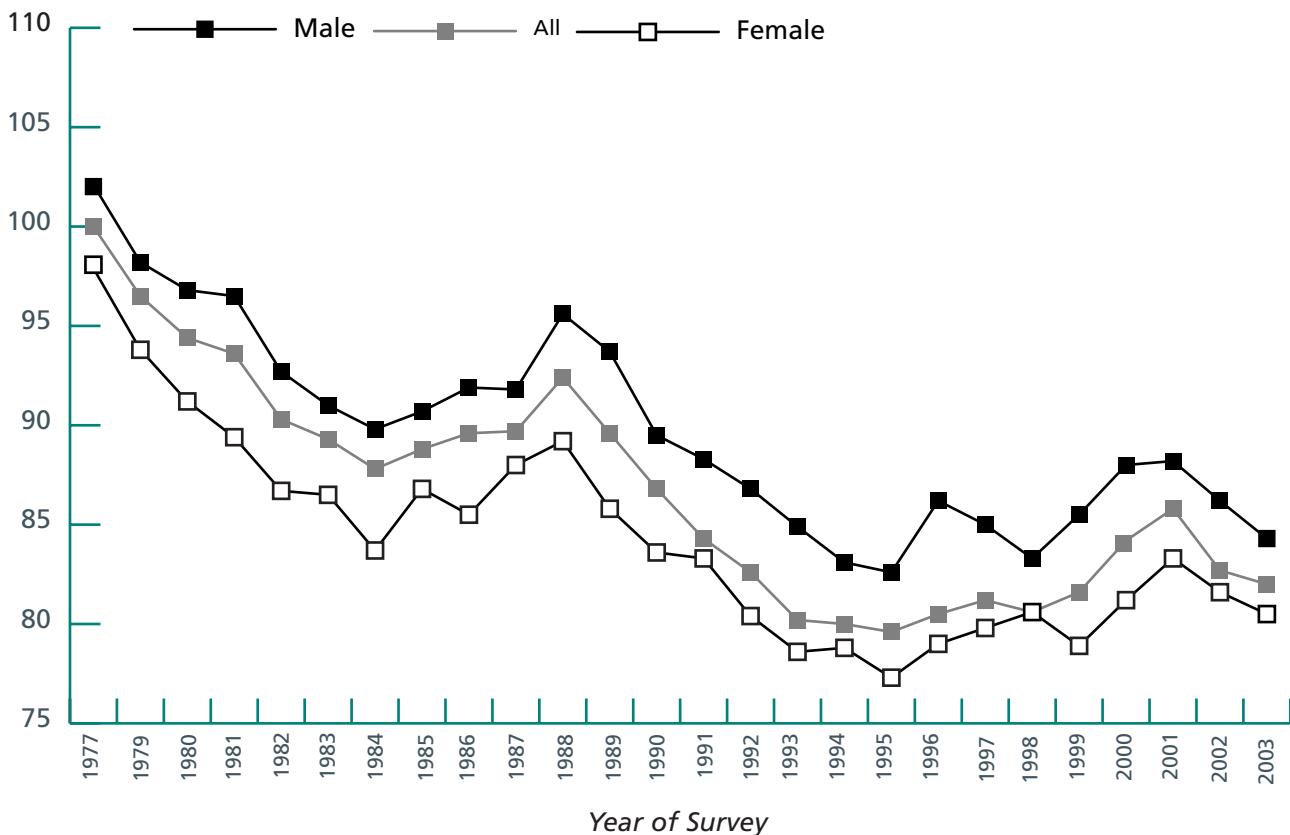


Figure 2: Male, female and all graduates' median starting salaries relative to the annual rate of average weekly earnings, 1977-2003.

* Data from 1978 were incompatible with those from other years and have been excluded from this analysis.

Table 4: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2003 (\$,000). Numbers shown below salary figures indicate total number of responses.

	Australian Government	State Government	Total Government	Professional Practise	Industry & Commerce	Schools	Tertiary Education	Total Education	Total	Males	Females
Humanities	35.2 67	34.5 57	35.0 140	35.0 79	30.0 479	39.2 106	36.3 22	39.0 128	33.0 888	35.0 185	33.0 703
Psychology	36.7 28	36.7 50	36.7 78	33.5 16	32.0 138	40.0 19	38.0 13	40.0 32	35.0 281	35.9 48	35.0 233
Social Work	38.8 18	37.6 117	37.8 136		35.0 49				37.0 209	36.3 17	37.1 192
Other Social Sciences		40.0 57	40.0 66	34.0 10	30.0 69			35.8 18	34.9 181	35.0 59	34.0 122
Accounting	38.4 26	34.0 46	35.0 76	34.0 570	35.0 277				35.0 952	35.0 380	34.0 572
Economics, Business	36.9 172	36.0 136	36.5 325	34.0 190	35.0 1,464	40.0 12	36.1 40	37.3 52	35.0 2,103	35.9 818	35.0 1,285
Law	38.0 62	37.0 54	38.0 118	38.0 293	38.5 65				38.0 490	39.0 154	38.0 336
Education		41.0 67	41.0 73		32.0 69	39.8 1,631		39.8 1,635	39.7 1,805	40.0 253	39.5 1,552
Physical Science		35.0 15	37.0 25	41.0 18	38.4 64			39.0 12	39.0 122	39.3 60	38.0 62
Biological Science	37.5 49	35.0 102	36.0 165	33.0 49	35.0 326	40.0 40	37.0 59	39.0 99	35.0 689	36.0 176	35.0 513
Mathematics	37.0 20		38.1 24	38.5 12	37.5 40			40.0 10	38.4 88	38.2 48	38.5 40
Computer Science	40.0 53	38.0 39	40.0 97	38.0 43	36.7 502		38.9 28	38.4 34	38.0 694	38.0 483	37.0 211
Agricultural Science		34.0 47	35.0 61		32.0 148				33.0 233	33.0 118	33.1 115
Earth Sciences		38.0 17	38.2 32	40.0 11	37.0 52				38.0 97	38.0 65	38.0 32
Veterinary Science				35.0 68					35.0 72	35.0 17	35.0 55
Engineering	42.7 68	40.3 102	41.0 192	40.0 246	40.0 542		38.0 13	38.0 13	40.0 1,007	40.0 782	40.0 225
Architecture & Building		36.0 11	40.0 46	30.0 114	32.0 84				33.0 251	34.0 129	33.0 122
Medicine		48.0 205	48.0 207						47.0 226	50.0 98	45.0 128
Paramedical Studies	37.0 59	36.0 1,294	36.5 1375	36.0 90	36.0 623	38.0 29	36.0 16	38.0 45	36.0 2,179	38.0 280	36.0 1,899
Dentistry		51.2 28	51.8 29	60.0 21					55.0 51	60.0 20	51.9 31
Pharmacy (pre-reg)		30.0 55	30.0 58		26.0 206				27.0 272	26.8 82	27.0 190
Optometry				49.0 21	50.0 26				50.0 49	50.0 13	49.5 36
Art & Design		34.0 12	35.0 21	27.0 13	29.0 154	39.8 53		39.8 56	31.0 275	33.9 73	30.0 202
All Fields	38.0 661	37.0 2,516	37.2 3,346	35.0 1,876	35.0 5,386	39.8 1,936	37.0 230	39.5 2,166	37.0 13,214	38.0 4,358	36.3 8,856
Males	39.5 283	39.0 556	39.0 895	36.0 755	37.0 2,191	40.0 302	38.0 79	40.0 381	38.0 4,358		
Females	37.0 378	37.0 1,960	37.0 2,451	35.0 1,121	34.0 3,195	39.7 1,634	36.8 151	39.1 1,785	36.3 8,856		

* Empty cells indicate that there were no cases, or fewer than ten, in the data.

New male graduates earned \$38,000, which was 84.3 per cent of average earnings, down from 86.2 per cent last year and 88.2 per cent in 2001. Salaries for females (\$36,300) were 80.5 per cent of average earnings, down from 81.6 per cent in 2002 and 83.3 per cent in 2001.

In dollar terms, the starting salary for all graduates rose by \$1,500 from \$35,500 (or 4.2 per cent). Salaries for males rose by \$1,000 from \$37,000 (or 2.7 per cent) while for females they increased by \$1,300 from \$35,000 (or 3.7 per cent)

At \$55,000, dentistry graduates earned the highest median starting salary, which was up markedly from \$52,000 last year, \$46,400 in 2001 and from \$50,000 in the 2000 GDS. There are relatively few dentistry graduates, and this adds volatility to the annual figures.

The largest rises between 2002 and 2003 were for optometry (up \$7,000 from \$43,000), dentistry (up \$3,000 from \$52,000) and physical sciences (up \$3,000 from \$36,000). As with dentistry, the large rise in optometry is possibly due to the relatively small number of graduates.

The overall salary for females was 95.5 per cent of males' earnings (94.6 per cent in 2002, 94.4 per cent in 2001, 92.3 per cent in 2000 and 1999).

For most fields of study there was a small, or negligible, difference between salaries for males and females. However, males earned markedly more than females in the fields of dentistry (\$8,100 difference), medicine (\$5,000 difference), art and design (\$3,900 difference) and paramedical studies and humanities (both \$2,000 difference).

In those fields in which the difference was in the females' favour, the size of the difference was negligible.

Differences in starting salaries between males and females can be partly explained in terms of the differing enrolment and employment profiles of male and female students. Males tend to have enrolled in the more highly paying fields of study while females tended to come from the middle and lower paying fields.

An examination of the top five ranked fields in terms of starting salaries (listed in Tables 4 and 5; dentistry, optometry, medicine, engineering and education) shows that they account for 45.3 per cent of male respondents but only 30.0 per cent of females.

Table 5: Fields of study ranked according to level of starting salary, 1999-2003 (= denotes equal ranking)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Dentistry	2	1	1	1	1
Optometry	3	3	3	3	2
Medicine	1	2	2	2	3
Engineering	4	=5	=4	4	4
Education	=7	6	=6	7	5
Physical Science	=7	10	=8	10	6
Mathematics	6	4	5	=8	7
Law	=11	12	=6	=8	=8
Earth Science	=5	7	7	9	=8
Computer Science	=5	=5	=4	5	9
Social Work	9	8	=8	=11	10
Paramedical	10	13	11	=11	11
Veterinary Science	8	9	9	13	12
Biological Science	=11	=14	=12	12	=13
Economics, Business	=11	=14	13	=14	=13
Psychology	13	11	=12	=14	=13
Accounting	=12	=15	10	=14	=14
Other Social Sciences	=14	=15	=12	6	=14
Architecture & Building	=14	=14	=15	=15	=15
Humanities	=14	=15	14	=15	=15
Agricultural Science	=12	=15	=15	=15	16
Art & Design	15	16	=15	16	17
Pharmacy (pre-reg)	16	17	16	17	18

Even when they graduate in the same field, differing employment options taken by males and females (for example, in terms of hours worked or the type of employer) can have an effect of salaries.

Most fields of study have shown a high degree of consistency over the years covered by GDS data. When ranked in terms of starting salaries in 2003, dentistry, optometry, medicine, engineering and education were the highest earning graduates and have been so in recent years (see Table 5).

The fields of architecture and pre-registration pharmacy each have a relatively low ranking, due to the further training requirements these graduates must meet for professional registration. They go on to higher salaries in subsequent years.

Of note in 2003 is the big fall for 'other social sciences' after a notable jump in 2002 which was related to an increase in police studies responses for that year.

There was \$28,000 difference between the top and bottom ranked fields. The middle rankings were not so widely separated. For example there was only \$4,000 difference between the eighth and 14th ranked fields.

Graduate Satisfaction

The *Course Experience Questionnaire* (CEQ) has been used to measure graduates' satisfaction with their study experiences since 1993. Broad satisfaction remained at a high level, 89.8 per cent, in 2003 (see Figure 3). Dissatisfaction has been low over the same period.

The broad satisfaction figure represents the percentage of respondents answering '3', '4' and '5' on a five-point scale (with the 5th point indicating highest satisfaction). The dissatisfaction measure is made up of responses '1' and '2'.

The satisfaction figure represents the percentage of respondents answering '4' or '5' on the five-point scale. This measure rose from 67 per cent in 1999 to 68 per cent in 2000 and has remained at that level since.

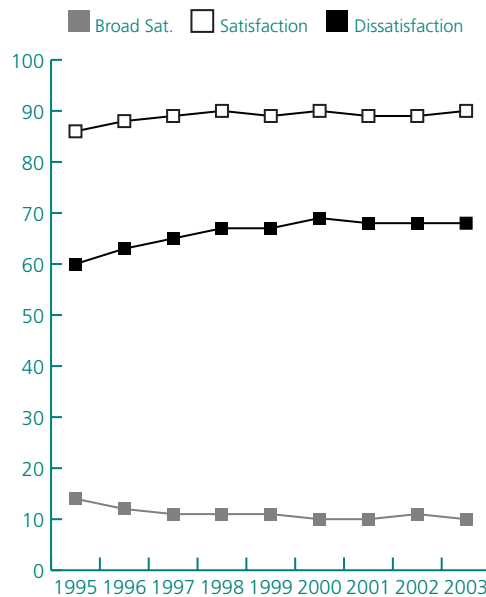


Figure 3: Levels of satisfaction with course, bachelor degree graduates, 1995-2003 (preliminary).

Further details about graduate destinations, starting salaries and the CEQ can be found in the forthcoming reports Graduate Destination Survey 2003, Graduate Starting Salaries 2003, Postgraduate Destination Survey 2003 and Course Experience Questionnaire 2003.

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