



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 *2004 GDS*, new graduates who completed the requirements for awards in the calendar year 2003 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 (figures for overseas residents are discussed in the full *GDS* report, to be published in the first half of 2005). Overall, 62.3 per cent of Australian resident graduates responded to the survey.

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

Graduates in 2004:

Work, Study, Salaries and Course Satisfaction — Main Points

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2004, 79.7 per cent (80.1 per cent last year) were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees.
- A further 12.9 per cent (12.1 per cent last year) were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment.
- An additional 7.4 per cent (7.8 per cent last year) were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey.
- These figures suggest a continued stable level of demand for new graduates after a period of improvement and consolidation between 1999 and 2001. Notably, there has been a small drop in the percentage of those not working while seeking full-time employment.
- Almost one-quarter of respondents, or 23.4 per cent (22.8 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 \$38,000 (\$37,000 last year). This was 81.6 per cent of average earnings, down slightly from 82.0 per cent last year, 82.7 per cent in 2002, 85.8 per cent in 2001, and 84.2 per cent in 2000.
- Males earned a starting salary of \$39,000 (up from \$38,000 last year) and females earned \$38,000 (up from \$36,300 last year).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the *Course Experience Questionnaire* (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 89.4 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

The results of the *2004 Graduate Destination Survey* (GDS) show that, of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 79.7 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, and a further 12.9 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (see Table 1a).

An additional 7.4 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment within four months of completing their qualifications.

These figures suggest a continued stable level of demand for new graduates after a period of improvement and consolidation between 1999 and 2001. Notably, there has been a small drop in the percentage of those not working while seeking full-time employment.

Generally, between one-fifth and one-quarter of all respondents elect to continue in further full-time study. In 2004, 23.4 per cent did so, up from 22.8 per cent in 2003 (see Table 1). These figures include those proceeding to honours years, other awards, and higher degrees.

A further 6.1 per cent of respondents were in part-time or casual work and were not seeking full-time employment (5.7 per cent in 2003), while 0.6 per cent were not working and seeking part-time or casual employment only (0.6 per cent in 2003). These figures have remained fairly stable over the last five years.

Of those graduates seeking full-time employment, females (79.7 per cent – see Table 1a) were as likely as males (79.8 per cent) to have found it by the time of the survey.

Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2002-2004 (%).

	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							
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
2004	68.3	24.6	3.5	0.4	3.2	24,267	100
Females							
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
2004	65.2	22.7	7.6	0.8	3.8	40,687	100
Persons*							
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
2004	66.4	23.4	6.1	0.6	3.5	64,965	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, 2002-2004 (%).

	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							
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
2004	79.8	8.9	11.4	20.2	100	16,584	18.9
Females							
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
2004	79.7	6.4	13.9	20.3	100	26,510	12.2
Persons*							
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
2004	79.7	7.4	12.9	20.3	100	43,102	14.7

*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.

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

Females were also as likely as males to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey (20.3 per cent as opposed to 20.2 per cent), but were notably less likely than males (6.4 per cent compared with 8.9 per cent) to have been without any work while seeking full-time employment.

It is notable that the percentage of graduates not working while seeking full-time employment has fallen slightly (to 7.4 per cent from 7.8 per cent) despite the slight overall rise in the total percentage seeking full-time employment (to 20.3 per cent from 19.9 per cent). Figure 1 suggests that this pattern has been developing in recent years, with graduates more likely to take part-time positions while still seeking full-time employment.

Females were much more likely than males (13.9 per cent compared with 11.4 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 (24.6 per cent) were slightly more likely than females (22.7 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2004 (see Table 1).

Table 1a indicates that 14.7 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position before 1 May in their final year of study.

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.

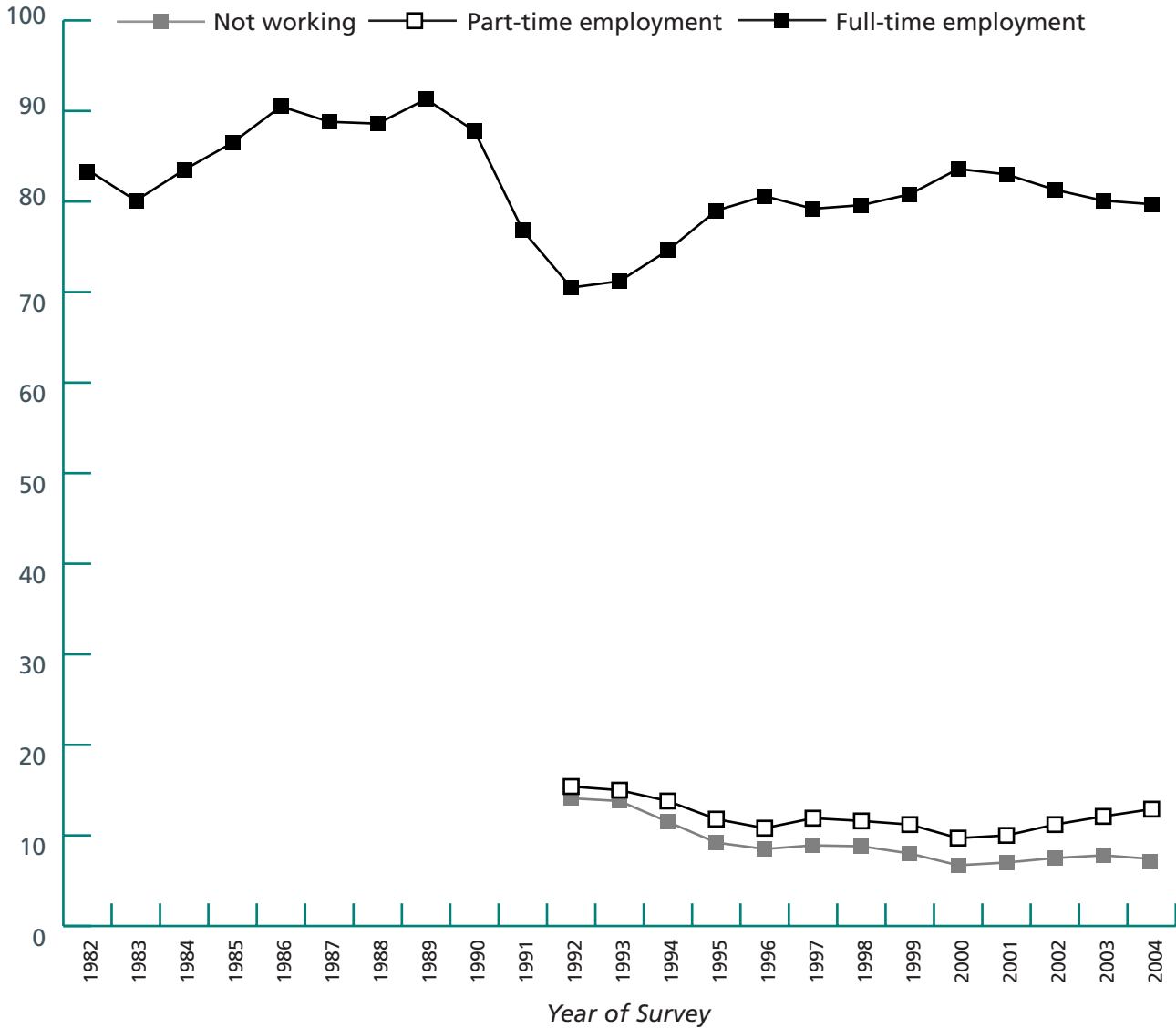


Figure 1: Bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment; percentage in full-time employment (1982-2004), percentage working part-time while seeking full-time employment (1992-2004), percentage not working while seeking full-time employment (1992-2004).

Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of study, 2004 (%).

	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	75.3	9.2	15.5	24.7	100	1,019	14.0
Architecture**	90.9	4.1	5.0	9.1	100	419	11.0
Building	89.3	3.9	6.8	10.7	100	384	25.9
Urb & Reg Planning	92.3	4.5	3.2	7.7	100	155	14.0
Humanities	67.0	12.3	20.8	33.0	100	3,361	18.3
Languages	71.7	9.8	18.5	28.3	100	600	14.2
Vis/Perf Arts	56.0	15.1	28.9	44.0	100	1,433	4.9
Social Sciences	68.5	13.2	18.3	31.5	100	447	27.8
Psychology	70.3	9.3	20.4	29.7	100	1,087	15.8
Social Work	77.9	7.0	15.0	22.1	100	951	17.8
Business Studies	80.1	7.3	12.6	19.9	100	6,333	20.6
Accounting	87.1	7.5	5.4	12.9	100	2,963	29.1
Economics	85.1	6.1	8.8	14.9	100	525	13.0
Education, Initial	79.6	3.1	17.3	20.4	100	5,888	10.2
Education Post/Oth	91.1	1.3	7.6	8.9	100	158	25.7
Aeronautical Eng	76.3	13.6	10.2	23.7	100	118	6.7
Chemical Eng	84.2	10.8	5.0	15.8	100	120	5.9
Civil Engineering	96.5	2.5	1.0	3.5	100	515	11.3
Electrical Eng	80.7	11.3	8.0	19.3	100	362	17.1
Electron/Comp Eng	77.7	13.4	8.9	22.3	100	471	15.3
Mechanical Eng	85.4	8.1	6.5	14.6	100	520	14.9
Mining Engineering	96.6	3.4	0.0	3.4	100	59	8.8
Other Engineering	85.8	8.2	6.1	14.2	100	330	18.4
Surveying	93.0	3.5	3.5	7.0	100	115	18.7
Dentistry	97.0	1.5	1.5	3.0	100	133	0.8
Health, Other	79.3	6.3	14.4	20.7	100	1,628	18.4
Nursing, Initial	95.9	0.6	3.5	4.1	100	2,563	3.7
Nursing, Post-initial	95.9	0.7	3.3	4.1	100	269	10.1
Pharmacy**	99.1	0.0	0.9	0.9	100	345	0.6
Medicine	98.3	0.3	1.5	1.7	100	1,030	0.6
Rehabilitation	91.0	2.1	6.8	9.0	100	1,071	0.9
Law	87.4	5.8	6.8	12.6	100	1,294	15.2
Law, Other	85.6	6.2	8.1	14.4	100	675	31.7
Computer Science	70.5	14.9	14.6	29.5	100	2,797	16.9
Life Sciences	69.0	10.8	20.2	31.0	100	2,111	10.4
Mathematics	64.4	18.2	17.3	35.6	100	225	13.8
Chemistry	78.7	10.1	11.1	21.3	100	207	12.9
Physics	69.0	10.1	20.9	31.0	100	129	11.2
Geology	79.3	12.9	7.9	20.7	100	140	2.7
Veterinary Science	98.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	100	152	0.0
Total %	79.7	7.4	12.9	20.3	100		14.7
Total N	34,360	3,172	5,570	8,742		43,102	

† Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

* Base figure is group in full-time employment.

** pre-registration

For example, medical graduates, of whom 98.3 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.

Other fields with high proportions in full-time employment at the time of the survey were pharmacy (99.1 per cent), veterinary science (98.0 per cent), dentistry (97.0 per cent), mining engineering (96.6 per cent), civil engineering (96.5 per cent), and initial and post-initial nursing education (both 95.9 per cent).

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

While the national employment figure fell slightly (0.4 of a percentage point) between 2003 and 2004, some fields of study experienced a notable improvement, including initial education (up by 8.4 percentage points), building (up by 5.9 percentage points), architecture (up 5.5 percentage points), and veterinary science (also up by 5.5 percentage points).

Several other fields also enjoyed improved employment prospects. However, the percentage of respondents in full-time employment at the time of the GDS fell markedly in some fields between 2003 and 2004. 'Law, other' fell by 9.0 percentage points, and aeronautical engineering fell by 7.6 percentage points.

Respondents from visual and performing arts (28.9 per cent) were the most likely to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment.

Those from mathematics (18.2 per cent), visual and performing arts (15.1 per cent) and computer science (14.9 per cent) were the most likely to have been without work while seeking full-time employment.

Many graduates were already in their full-time employment while studying. Respondents from 'law, other' (31.7 per cent) and accounting (29.1 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 2003 show that, in the population as a whole, 3.1 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were unemployed. *GDS* employment figures differ from ABS figures in that the *GDS* 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.

Graduate Starting Salaries

In 2004, the median annual starting salary for new bachelor degree graduates in their first full-time employment was \$38,000 (up from \$37,000 last year). This was 81.6 per cent of an annual rate of average weekly earnings (\$46,600 at the time), and down markedly from 85.8 per cent in 2001.

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

Table 3: Annual rate of average weekly earnings (AWE) and median graduate starting salaries (GSS), and relativity, 1977-2004 (\$,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
2004	46.6	38.0	81.6

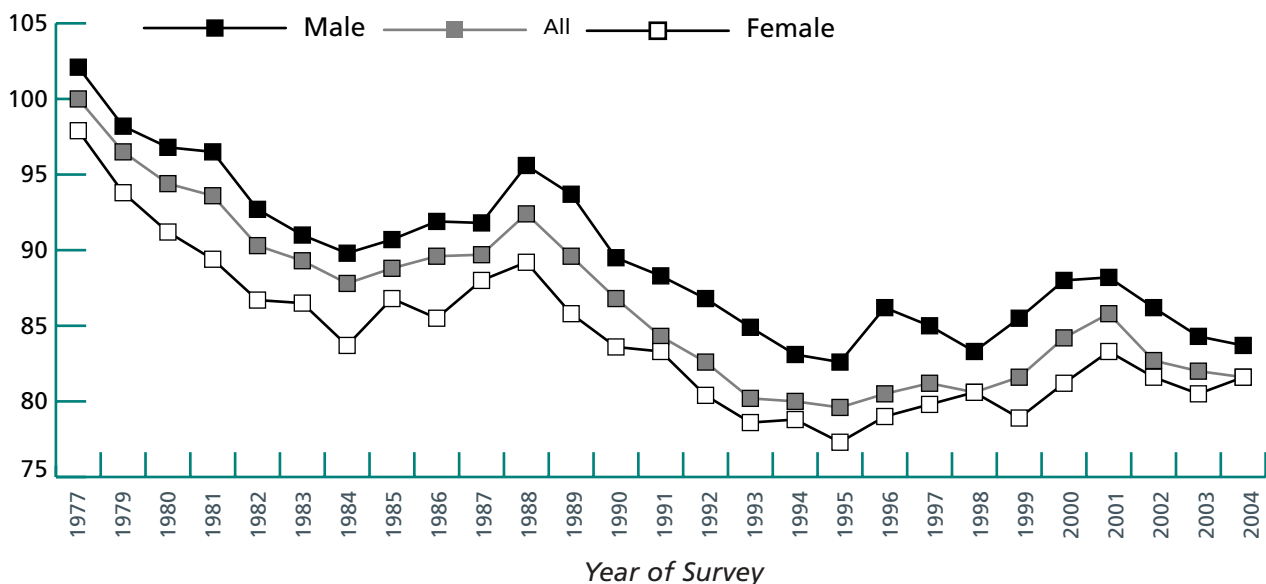


Figure 2: Male, female and all graduates' median starting salaries relative to the annual rate of average weekly earnings, 1977-2004.

Table 4: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2004 (\$,000). Figures 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	38.2	37.0	38.0	35.0	32.0	40.0	38.0	40.0	35.0	36.0	33.1
	79	65	157	77	522	72	40	112	934	233	701
Psychology	39.0	37.9	38.3	32.0	35.0	41.0	38.0	40.0	37.0	38.7	37.0
	30	53	84	10	154	12	19	31	297	46	251
Social Work		38.3	39.0		35.7				37.4	37.5	37.4
		86	96		86				200	16	184
Other Social Science	37.0	36.5	35.5		30.0		37.1	40.0	34.0	34.0	34.0
	14	40	59		62		10	17	161	53	108
Accounting	38.5	36.0	37.4	35.0	35.0				35.0	35.0	35.0
	22	36	67	632	317				1,059	426	633
Economics, Business	41.0	36.0	38.7	33.9	35.0	40.0	35.6	37.5	35.0	37.0	35.0
	139	124	285	250	1,626	13	28	41	2,305	902	1,403
Law	40.0	39.0	40.0	37.8	40.0				39.5	41.0	38.0
	64	53	118	334	87				551	175	376
Education		41.1	41.6		34.0	40.0		40.0	40.0	41.0	40.0
		45	52		70	1,582		1,588	1,752	260	1,492
Physical Science	39.6	40.3	39.6	37.5	37.0			39.0	37.0	37.0	38.0
	15	14	29	12	69			10	126	63	63
Biological Science	40.0	37.0	37.0	35.0	35.0	41.0	38.4	40.0	36.0	37.0	36.0
	24	111	143	46	304	61	59	120	673	181	492
Mathematics	39.9		40.0		40.0	40.0		40.0	40.0	40.0	40.0
	12		17		44	11		11	81	44	37
Computer Science	43.6	39.0	40.0	40.0	37.0		40.0	40.0	38.0	38.0	38.0
	50	40	102	62	587		30	36	814	580	234
Agricultural Science	37.0	35.3	36.0	26.5	34.0				35.0	35.0	33.0
	11	42	65	12	217				318	164	154
Earth Sciences		39.0	40.0		38.0				39.0	38.0	39.9
		15	25		56				95	64	31
Veterinary Science				36.0					36.0	36.3	36.0
				81					89	20	69
Engineering	43.4	42.0	42.0	40.0	42.0		40.0	40.1	41.0	41.0	41.0
	48	107	186	299	542		12	14	1,064	843	221
Architecture & Building			40.0	32.0	35.3				34.5	36.0	33.0
			47	142	110				309	171	138
Medicine		50.0	50.0						50.0	50.0	48.0
		242	247						260	105	155
Paramedical Studies	39.0	38.0	38.0	38.8	38.0	40.0	40.6	40.0	38.0	40.0	38.0
	49	1,360	1,435	83	644	27	15	42	2,244	302	1,924
Dentistry		62.0	60.0	55.0					60.0	56.5	60.0
		35	39	16					55	16	39
Pharmacy**		30.0	30.0		27.5				29.0	29.6	29.0
		69	71		175				257	71	186
Optometry				55.0	50.0				50.0	52.0	46.5
				13	37				55	25	30
Art & Design	41.1		39.5		30.0	40.0		40.0	32.0	33.0	31.9
	10		22		219	44		51	327	100	227
All Fields	40.0	39.0	39.0	36.0	35.0	40.0	38.0	40.0	38.0	39.0	38.0
	596	2,559	3,350	2,107	5,933	1,860	257	2,117	14,026	4,860	9,166
Males	41.0	40.0	40.0	38.0	38.0	40.9	38.0	40.0	39.0		
	244	550	885	929	2,519	304	86	390	4,860		
Females	40.0	38.0	38.5	35.0	35.0	40.0	38.0	40.0	38.0		
	352	2,009	2,465	1,178	3,414	1,556	171	1,727	9,166		

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

** pre-registration

New male graduates earned \$39,000 which was 83.7 per cent of average earnings, down from 84.3 per cent in 2003, 86.2 per cent in 2002 and 88.2 per cent in 2001. Salaries for females (\$38,000) were 81.6 per cent of average earnings, up from 80.5 per cent last year, equal to the 2002 figure and down from 83.3 per cent in 2001. Because these figures are medians, there is no expectation that the figure for all graduates should fall between the figures for males and females.

In dollar terms, the starting salary for all graduates rose by \$1,000 from \$37,000 (or 2.7 per cent). Salaries for males rose by \$1,000 from \$38,000 (or 2.6 per cent) while for females they increased by \$1,700 from \$36,300 (or 4.7 per cent).

At \$60,000, dentistry graduates earned the highest median starting salary, which was up markedly from \$55,000 last year. They were followed by graduates from medicine and optometry, both on \$50,000.

The largest rises between 2003 and 2004 were for dentistry (up \$5,000 from \$55,000) and medicine (up \$3,000 from \$47,000).

Continuing a trend, the overall salary for females was 97.4 per cent of males' earnings (95.5 per cent in 2003, 94.6 per cent in 2002, 94.4 per cent in 2001, and 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 optometry (\$5,500 difference), architecture and building (\$3,000 difference), law (also \$3,000 difference) and humanities (\$2,900 difference).

In those fields in which the difference was in the females' favour, the size of the difference was largely negligible except in the case of dentistry (\$3,500 difference) and earth sciences (\$1,900 difference).

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 ranked fields.

Table 5: Fields of study ranked according to level of starting salary, 2000-2004 (= denotes equal ranking).

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Dentistry	1	1	1	1	1
Optometry	3	3	3	2	=2
Medicine	2	2	2	3	=2
Engineering	=5	=4	4	4	3
Education	6	=6	7	5	=4
Mathematics	4	5	=8	7	=4
Law	12	=6	=8	=8	5
Earth Science	7	7	9	=8	6
Computer Science	=5	=4	5	9	=7
Paramedical	13	11	=11	11	=7
Social Work	8	=8	=11	10	8
Physical Science	10	=8	10	6	=9
Psychology	11	=12	=14	=13	=9
Veterinary Science	9	9	13	12	=10
Biological Science	=14	=12	12	=13	=10
Humanities	=15	14	=15	=15	=11
Economics, Business	=14	13	=14	=13	=11
Agricultural Science	=15	=15	=15	16	=11
Accounting	=15	10	=14	=14	=11
Arch.* & Building	=14	=15	=15	=15	12
Other Social Science	=15	=12	6	=14	13
Art & Design	16	=15	16	17	14
Pharmacy*	17	16	17	18	15

* pre-registration

An examination of the top ranked fields in terms of starting salaries (listed in Tables 4 and 5; dentistry, optometry, medicine, engineering, mathematics and education) shows that they account for 26.6 per cent of male respondents and 21.5 per cent of females.

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 on 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 2004, dentistry, optometry, medicine, engineering, education and mathematics were the highest earning fields and have been so in recent years (see Table 5).

The pre-registration fields of architecture and 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.

There was \$31,000 difference between the top and bottom ranked fields. The middle rankings were not widely separated. For example there was only \$5,000 difference between the fifth and 12th 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, 89.4 per cent, in 2004 (89.8 per cent last year – 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.

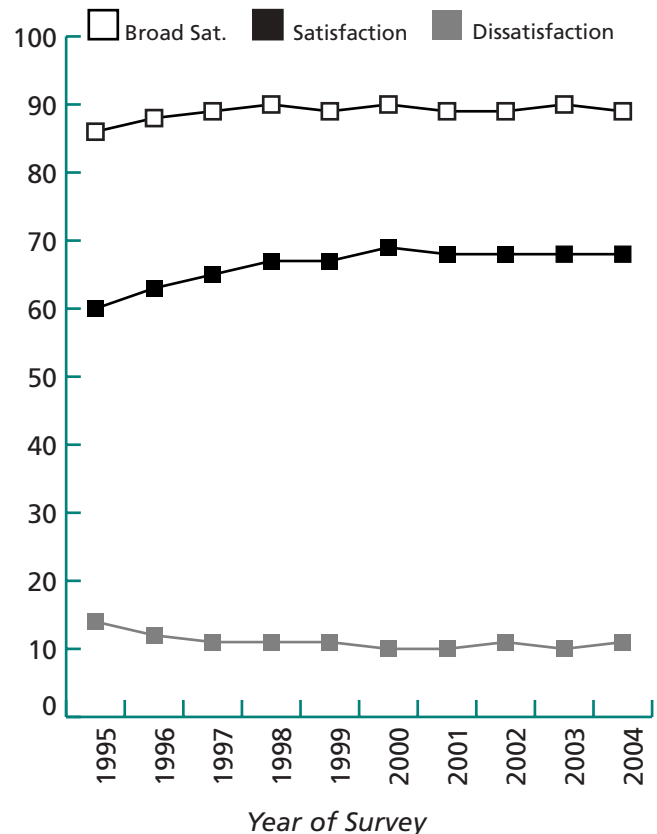


Figure 3: Levels of satisfaction with course, bachelor degree graduates, 1995-2004 (preliminary).

Further details about graduate destinations, starting salaries and the CEQ can be found in the forthcoming reports *Graduate Destination Survey 2004*, *Graduate Starting Salaries, 2004*, *Postgraduate Destination Survey, 2004* and the reports of the *2004 Course Experience Questionnaire* and *Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire*. To order copies, please call the GCCA on (03) 8344 9333 or visit our online shop at www.gradlink.edu.au.