

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 2008 AGS, new graduates who

completed the requirements for awards in the calendar year 2007 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 *Graduate Destinations* report, to be published in 2009). Overall, 61.1 per cent of the over

158,000 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](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au).

## Graduates in 2008:

Work, Study, Salaries and Course Satisfaction – Key Points

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2008 (see Table 1a);
  - 85.2 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (up from 84.5 per cent last year);
  - 9.6 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (down from 10.5 per cent last year); and
  - 5.2 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey (5.0 per cent last year).
- AGS figures show employment prospects for new graduates fell from a recent high point in 2000, levelled out between 2003 and 2004, and have since shown a continued improvement (see Figure 1). However, these employment figures were gathered in late 2007 and early 2008, and as such precede the current global financial downturn.
- Between 2004 and 2007 there was a sustained drop in the percentage of those not working while seeking full-time employment. The 2008 figure represents a small rise of 0.2 of a percentage point.
- Around one-fifth of respondents (19.6 per cent – down from 20.0 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 was \$45,000 (\$43,000 in 2007). This was 80.9 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (\$55,600 at the time of the AGS), up from 80.1 per cent in 2007 (see Table 3).
- Males started work on a median salary of \$47,000 (up from \$45,000 in 2007) and females earned \$45,000 (up from \$42,000 in 2007) (see Table 4).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 88.4 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses (see Figure 3).



# Employment Outcomes

**The results of the 2008 AGS show that, of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 85.2 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, with a further 9.6 per cent working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (see Table 1a).**

An additional 5.2 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment four months after completing their qualifications.

These are the strongest AGS employment figures for new graduates since 1990<sup>1</sup>. After a drop in employment prospects for new graduates from a previous high point in 2000, figures levelled out between 2003 and 2004,

before continually improving since 2005.

In 2008 there was a slight increase in the percentage of graduates who were not working while seeking full time employment, from 5.0 per cent in 2007 to 5.2 per cent in 2008. This is after a steady decrease over the years 2004-07, when the percentage of those not working while seeking full-time employment fell from 7.8 per cent in 2003<sup>2</sup> to 5.0 per cent in 2007.

Generally, between one-fifth and one-quarter of respondents elect to continue in further full-time study<sup>3</sup>. In 2008, 19.6 per cent did so, down only slightly from 20.0 per cent in the previous year (see Table 1). A fall in this figure is often associated with a strengthening labour market. While a decline in graduate employment prospects is now possible due to the global economic downturn,

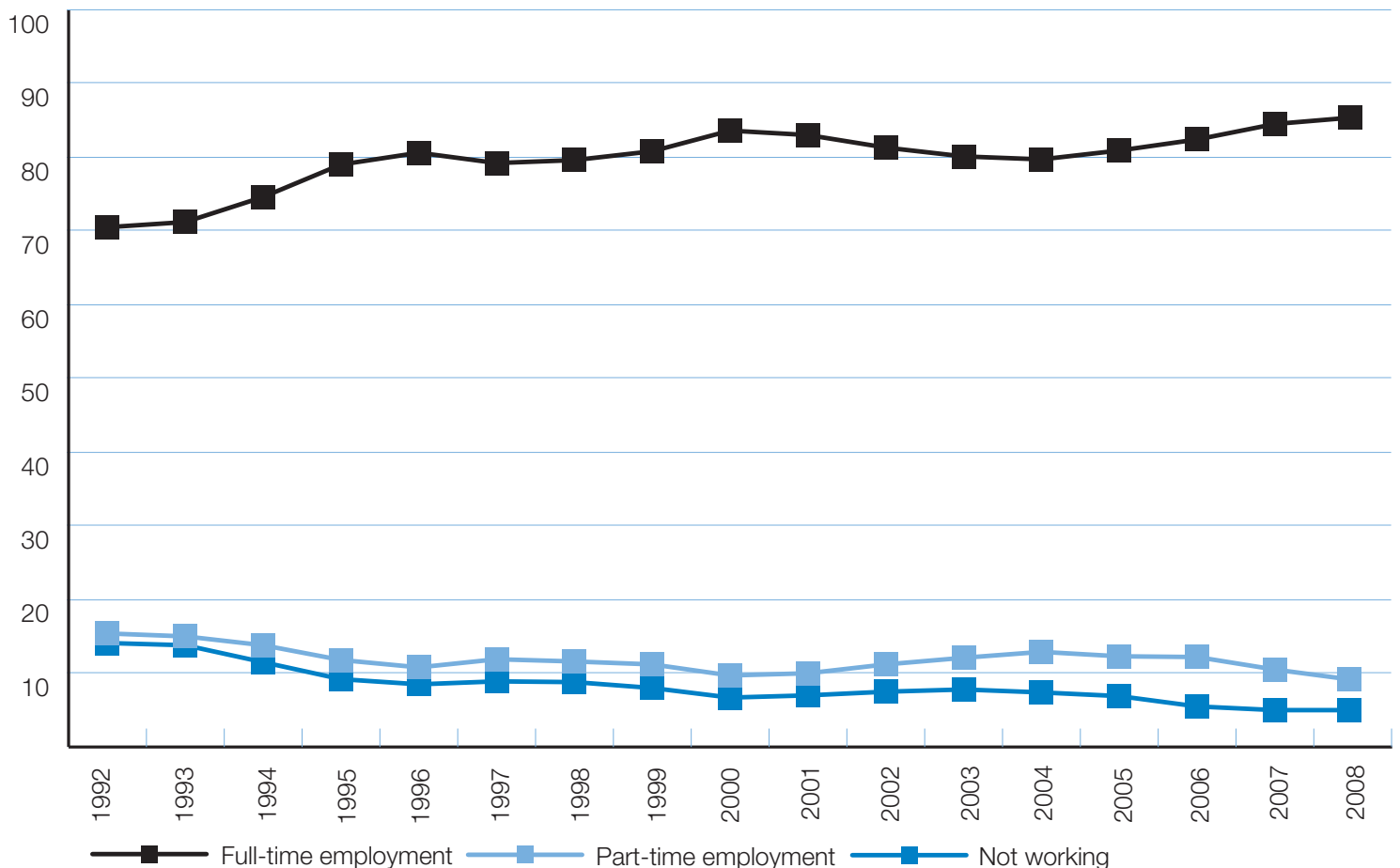
these figures indicate that there was a good deal of confidence in the graduate labour market in the period covered by the survey.

In addition to those available for full-time employment, a further 8.4 per cent of respondents were in part-time or casual work and were not seeking full-time employment (8.1 per cent in 2007), while 0.5 per cent were not working and seeking part-time or casual employment only (also 0.5 per cent in 2007). These figures have remained relatively stable in recent years.

Of those graduates available for full-time employment, males (85.5 per cent — see Table 1a) were only slightly more likely than females (85.0 per cent) to have found work by the time of the survey.

Females were less likely than males (4.7 per cent compared with 6.0 per cent) to have been without any work while seeking full-time employment and they were more likely (10.3 per cent) to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment than males (8.5 per cent). This 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 professional part-time employment.

1. See GCA's *Graduate Destinations, 2007* report, Table 5.
2. Ibid, Table 2a.
3. Ibid, Table 2.



**Figure 1: Bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment; percentage in full-time employment, percentage working part-time while seeking full-time employment, and percentage not working while seeking full-time employment (1992-2008).**

**Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2006-08 (%).**

	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
<b>Males</b>							
2006	68.8	21.2	5.5	0.3	4.3	100	24,904
2007	69.3	21.1	5.1	0.3	4.2	100	24,145
2008	68.6	20.5	5.7	0.3	4.9	100	24,035
<b>Females</b>							
2006	65.0	19.8	10.0	0.6	4.6	100	41,780
2007	65.5	19.3	9.8	0.6	4.8	100	40,876
2008	64.9	19.0	10.1	0.5	5.5	100	40,538
<b>Persons*</b>							
2006	66.4	20.3	8.3	0.5	4.5	100	66,702
2007	66.9	20.0	8.1	0.5	4.5	100	65,110
2008	66.2	19.6	8.4	0.5	5.3	100	64,648

\*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.

**Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by sex, 2006-08 (%).**

	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
<b>Males</b>							
2006	83.0	6.4	10.6	17.0	100	17,119	16.0
2007	85.6	5.8	8.6	14.4	100	16,736	15.5
2008	85.5	6.0	8.5	14.5	100	16,490	16.9
<b>Females</b>							
2006	81.9	4.9	13.2	18.1	100	27,154	10.9
2007	83.9	4.6	11.6	16.1	100	26,733	10.3
2008	85.0	4.7	10.3	15.0	100	26,292	10.7
<b>Persons*</b>							
2006	82.4	5.5	12.2	17.6	100	44,286	12.9
2007	84.5	5.0	10.5	15.5	100	43,549	12.3
2008	85.2	5.2	9.6	14.8	100	42,811	13.1

\* 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.



Males (20.5 per cent) were slightly more likely than females (19.0 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2008 after completing their course in the previous year (see Table 1).

Of those available for full-time employment, Table 1a and Figure 1 demonstrate that graduates were more likely to have been working on a part-time or casual basis than to have been without any work at all. In terms of the national percentages shown in GradStats, there has been a notable difference between these two groups in recent years although this has been narrowing recently (seen in Figure 1).

Table 1a indicates that 13.1 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 (12.3 per cent in 2007<sup>4</sup>). As in previous years, males were 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.

Table 1b shows employment figures for various bachelor degree sub-groups. Figures for some groups, such as graduates who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders and graduates with a disability, need to be interpreted with caution because small numbers of respondents are involved. And as these figures can 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 more likely to have been in full-time employment at the time of the survey (89.2 per cent) than those who had studied mainly full-time (84.3 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 (79.7 per cent compared with 85.2 per cent).

Graduates with a combined or double degree had better employment figures (88.3 per cent) than those with a single degree (84.7 per cent).

Respondents were almost equally likely to be in full-time employment whether they gave a residential postcode in a capital city or regional area. Further analysis in the forthcoming report will add useful perspective to the figures shown in Table 1b.

4. See GradStats 12, December 2007

**Table 1b: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by various cohorts, 2008 (%)†.**

	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
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>42,811</b>
Aged less than 25	84.6	5.2	10.2	15.4	100	27,604
Graduates with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background	82.0	4.7	13.4	18.0	100	344
Graduates from a non-English speaking background	79.7	9.8	10.5	20.3	100	5,713
Graduates with a disability	77.0	11.1	11.9	23.0	100	943
Studied mainly full-time	84.3	5.6	10.1	15.7	100	35,174
Studied mainly part-time	89.2	3.5	7.3	10.8	100	7,528
Studied mainly internally (on-campus)	84.5	5.5	10.0	15.5	100	35,458
Studied mainly externally (distance)	91.3	2.9	5.8	8.7	100	3,566
Studied mixed mode (internal & distance)	85.9	4.4	9.7	14.1	100	3,698
Double/combined degree	88.3	4.3	7.4	11.7	100	5,895
Single degree	84.7	5.3	10.0	15.3	100	36,815
Regional resident	85.4	4.8	9.8	14.6	100	10,255
Capital city resident	84.9	5.4	9.7	15.1	100	30,626

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

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 97.6 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 (97.9 per cent in full-time employment) are required to undertake a 12 month period of supervised employment as pharmacists in order to gain professional registration.

Other fields with high proportions in full-time employment at the time of the survey were mining engineering (100.0 per cent), civil engineering (97.3 per cent), initial nursing education (96.7 per cent) and post-initial nursing education (96.1 per cent).

Respondents in visual and performing arts, life sciences, and humanities were the most likely to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the AGS. The graduates of some fields of education can sometimes take longer to find full-time employment than those from other fields and this is reflected in the employment 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 and 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.

While the national graduate employment figure rose by 0.7 of a percentage point (from 84.5 per cent to 85.2 per cent) between 2007 and 2008, some fields of education experienced notable improvements, including mathematics (up by 4.7 percentage points), geology (up by 4.4 percentage points) and chemical engineering (also up by 4.4 percentage points)<sup>5</sup>.

Indicating a degree of volatility, the employment figure for mathematics graduates fell by 4.9 percentage points in 2007 after a notable rise between 2005 and 2006.

The percentage of respondents in full-time employment at the time of the AGS fell in some fields between 2007 and 2008. The employment figure for 'education (post/other)' graduates fell most notably but this is based on a small number of responses and should be treated with caution. The other falls were generally slight, with the employment figure for chemistry graduates falling by 3.4 percentage points, for aeronautical engineering graduates by 2.6 percentage points and for veterinary science, architecture and dentistry graduates by just over two percentage points.

Respondents from visual and performing arts (22.6 per cent) were the most likely to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment. Those from physical sciences (12.4 per cent) and visual and performing arts (10.5 per cent) were the most likely to have been without any work while seeking full-time employment.

As discussed previously, many graduates already had their full-time employment early in their final year of study. Respondents from the small 'education (post/other)' field (35.5 per cent), 'law, other'<sup>6</sup> (26.6 per cent), computer science (23.9 per cent), building (23.2 per cent) and accounting (23.1 per cent) were the 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 2007<sup>7</sup> show that, in the population as a whole (aged 15-64), 2.0 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were unemployed (down from 2.4 per cent in 2006 and 2.8 per cent in 2005). The comparative figure for the total population (with or without non-school qualifications) was 4.3 per cent and 6.5 per cent for persons with no postsecondary 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 solid.

<sup>5</sup> See *GradStats* 12, December 2007

<sup>6</sup> Law-related courses and those beyond initial legal training

<sup>7</sup> *Education and Work*, May 2007, 6227.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics.



**Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of education, 2008 (%).**

	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	82.2	5.9	11.9	17.8	100	759	16.0
Architecture	92.2	3.6	4.3	7.8	100	587	8.5
Building	91.6	4.0	4.4	8.4	100	428	23.2
Urban/Regional Planning	93.3	2.4	4.3	6.7	100	208	14.4
Humanities	75.3	8.9	15.8	24.7	100	3,725	15.1
Languages	77.0	8.2	14.8	23.0	100	574	12.4
Visual/Perform. Arts	66.9	10.5	22.6	33.1	100	1,324	7.4
Social Sciences	77.2	8.9	13.8	22.8	100	347	17.2
Psychology	77.3	8.0	14.8	22.7	100	1,328	13.5
Social Work	86.4	4.4	9.2	13.6	100	841	13.2
Business Studies	84.8	5.7	9.5	15.2	100	6,610	18.7
Accounting	88.6	5.7	5.7	11.4	100	3,185	23.1
Economics	87.4	5.9	6.7	12.6	100	476	12.0
Education - Initial	82.9	2.8	14.3	17.1	100	5,226	8.9
Education - Post/Other	77.5	2.5	20.0	22.5	100	40	35.5
Aero. Eng	89.5	7.0	3.5	10.5	100	143	7.8
Chemical Eng	90.6	7.3	2.1	9.4	100	191	2.3
Civil Eng	97.3	2.0	0.7	2.7	100	562	11.7
Electrical Eng	91.9	4.9	3.2	8.1	100	408	11.5
Electron/Comp Eng	89.1	6.0	4.8	10.9	100	414	13.0
Mechanical Eng	93.9	2.6	3.5	6.1	100	492	10.0
Mining Eng	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	70	17.1
Other Eng	92.4	3.5	4.1	7.6	100	461	13.1
Surveying	94.2	3.3	2.5	5.8	100	121	14.0
Dentistry	93.2	3.4	3.4	6.8	100	147	0.0
Health Other	87.4	4.3	8.4	12.6	100	1,758	14.1
Nursing (Initial)	96.7	1.0	2.3	3.3	100	2,971	3.2
Nursing (Post-initial)	96.1	0.9	3.0	3.9	100	335	4.3
Pharmacy	97.9	1.5	0.6	2.1	100	472	1.7
Medicine	97.6	1.1	1.3	2.4	100	901	1.9
Rehabilitation	93.8	2.0	4.2	6.2	100	1,077	0.9
Law	91.0	4.6	4.4	9.0	100	1,183	18.6
Law Other	88.6	4.2	7.2	11.4	100	667	26.6
Computer Science	84.2	8.0	7.8	15.8	100	1,633	23.9
Life Sciences	74.6	7.6	17.8	25.4	100	2,188	9.2
Mathematics	85.5	6.5	8.0	14.5	100	262	9.4
Chemistry	79.6	7.5	12.9	20.4	100	186	5.4
Physical Sciences	77.1	12.4	10.5	22.9	100	153	14.4
Geology	90.4	4.3	5.3	9.6	100	188	8.2
Veterinary Science	91.8	4.7	3.5	8.2	100	170	0.0
<b>Total %</b>	<b>85.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>42,811</b>	<b>13.1</b>
<b>Total N</b>	<b>36,481</b>	<b>2,226</b>	<b>4,104</b>	<b>6,330</b>	<b>42,811</b>		<b>4,786</b>

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

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

## Graduate Starting Salaries

**In 2008, 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 was \$45,000 (up from \$43,000 last year). This was 80.9 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (\$55,600 at the time of the AGS), up from 80.1 per cent in 2007 and 79.7 per cent in 2006 but down from 2005's 81.8 per cent and down markedly from 85.8 per cent in 2001 (see Table 3).**

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.

Graduate median starting salaries as a percentage of male average weekly earnings remain below levels experienced during the 1970s and 1980s (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

In 2008, new male graduates earned \$47,000, which was 84.5 per cent of male average earnings, up from 83.8 per cent in 2007, 82.0 per cent in 2006 and 81.8 per cent in 2005 but still down notably from a recent high point of 88.2 per cent in 2001. Median starting salaries for females (\$45,000) were 80.9 per cent of male average earnings, up from 78.2 per cent in 2007, 78.1 per cent in 2006 and 79.8 per cent in 2005 and lower than the recent high of 83.3 per cent in 2001<sup>8</sup>.

In dollar terms, the 2008 starting salary for all graduates rose by \$2,000 (or 4.7 per cent) from \$43,000 in 2007. Salaries for males rose by \$2,000 from \$45,000 (or 4.4 per cent) while for females they increased by \$3,000 from \$42,000 (or 7.1 per cent)<sup>9</sup>.

At \$70,000, the starting salary for dentistry graduates was \$2,000 higher than in 2007 and remained the highest for this group of graduates (see Table 4)<sup>10</sup>. They were followed by graduates from optometry (\$60,000), engineering (\$54,000) and earth sciences and medicine (both \$50,000).

Graduates in a number of fields must meet additional training requirements in order to gain professional registration and this can sometimes result in relatively low starting salaries. As an example, pharmacy graduates (pre-registration) earned low starting salaries (\$34,000) due to the further on-the-job training requirements they must meet for professional registration. Additional research<sup>11</sup> has shown that their salaries grow very strongly upon registration.

Graduates in the art and design field earned \$36,700, but these graduates 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 2007 and 2008 were for physical sciences (up \$4,100 from \$42,900), accounting (up \$4,000 from \$40,000) and engineering (up \$4,000 from \$50,000)<sup>12</sup>. Starting salaries for medical graduates fell by \$1,000 and initial analysis shows that the average number of reported working hours fell slightly between 2007 and 2008.

This change will require detailed analysis in GCA's *Graduate Salaries 2008* report, to be published in 2009.

Between 1999 and 2005, salaries for females as a percentage of males' salaries grew from 92.3 per cent to 97.5 per cent. This trend ended in 2006 when the overall salary for females dropped to 95.2 per cent of males' earnings. In 2007 this relativity fell to 93.3 per cent but in 2008 rose 95.7 per cent<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 3: Annual rate of male average weekly earnings (MAWE) and median starting salaries for bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in first full-time employment (GSS), 1977-2008 (\$,000).**

	MAWE \$	GSS \$	MAWE GSS %
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
2005	48.9	40.0	81.8
2006	51.2	40.8	79.7
2007	53.7	43.0	80.1
2008	55.6	45.0	80.9

\* 1978 data were excluded as figures were not compatible.

8. See previous editions of *GradStats*

9. *ibid*

10. *ibid*

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

12. See previous editions of *GradStats*

13. *ibid*



**Table 4: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2008 (\$,000). Figures shown below salary figures indicate related number of responses.\***

	Aust. Govt	State Govt	Public Health	Total Govt	Prof. Pract.	Ind./ Com.	Scho- ols	Tert. Ed.	Total Ed.	Total	Males	Fe- males
Accounting	48.0	42.0		47.3	43.0	44.0		51.4	45.0	44.0	44.0	44.0
	31	11		65	688	460		10	19	1,259	536	723
Agricultural Science		45.5		45.0	40.0	42.0				42.9	43.0	42.0
		16		29	18	155				226	99	127
Architecture & Building		47.0		48.9	40.0	47.0				43.0	45.0	40.0
		10		59	220	168				452	241	211
Art & Design				46.0	35.0	35.0	46.1		46.0	36.7	40.0	35.1
				13	10	221	48		55	324	86	238
Biological Sciences	46.5	43.9	43.5	45.0	41.7	42.0	47.0	47.0	47.0	44.0	45.0	43.4
	13	26	56	126	69	388	71	65	136	792	242	550
Computer Science	51.0	47.1		50.0	49.7	45.0		51.5	50.2	46.5	47.0	45.0
	19	12		46	18	416		15	22	517	427	90
Dentistry			61.5	61.5	70.0					70.0	75.0	69.0
			30	32	27					62	21	41
Earth Sciences					50.0	50.0			45.0	50.0	47.4	58.0
					13	97			58	120	76	44
Economics, Business	49.0	46.3	43.0	47.0	42.0	42.0	45.0	45.7	47.8	42.5	45.0	41.0
	76	72	19	233	309	1,842	26	32	1,339	2,617	1,139	1,478
Education		48.2		48.5		38.0	47.8		51.0	47.0	48.0	47.0
		22		31		82	1,337		11	1,495	250	1,245
Engineering	55.0	50.1		52.0	54.0	55.0			46.1	54.0	54.0	55.0
	45	26		91	473	698			128	1,294	1,075	219
Humanities	46.0	44.3	47.5	45.9	46.2	38.0	46.2	44.5		40.0	42.0	40.0
	78	68	10	208	146	725	94	34		1,332	344	988
Law	48.1	47.8		48.0	46.0	45.0			50.0	47.0	48.0	47.0
	34	22		93	249	112			23	462	152	310
Mathematics	52.0			50.0	50.0	46.5	50.0			48.2	49.5	48.0
	17			21	11	62	19			118	56	62
Medicine			50.0	50.0		47.0				50.0	53.0	50.0
			277	280		30				324	99	225
Optometry					65.0	55.0				60.0	68.0	60.0
					38	10				54	20	34
Paramedical Studies	45.0	50.0	45.0	45.0	47.0	44.5	46.0	44.0	45.0	45.0	47.0	45.0
	11	51	1,410	1,494	183	472	27	16	43	2,342	274	2,068
Pharmacy (pre-reg)			46.0	46.0		32.5				34.0	34.5	33.7
			60	63		225				295	90	205
Physical Sciences				50.0	52.5	45.0			46.0	47.0	47.0	46.1
				23	14	83			13	135	80	55
Psychology	45.0	46.1	46.0	45.0	42.0	41.0	50.0	47.0	48.0	43.5	45.0	43.1
	24	26	17	82	28	183	33	16	49	416	77	339
Social Sciences	44.0			45.0	40.0	38.0			43.0	42.0	43.0	41.5
	16			65	13	75			13	193	43	150
Social Work		49.0	47.0	47.0		41.5				45.0	42.6	45.0
		12	21	49		19				159	15	144
Veterinary Science					40.0					40.0	41.3	40.0
					62					74	19	55
All Fields	48.4	46.8	45.8	46.0	45.5	42.5	47.0	46.2	47.0	45.0	47.0	45.0
	394	401	1,938	3,115	2,601	6,535	1,700	231	1,931	15,062	5,461	9,601
Males	50.0	47.2	48.7	48.3	48.0	45.4	48.0	48.0	48.0	47.0		
	167	135	288	732	1,192	2,927	308	81	389	5,461		
Females	47.3	46.7	45.0	45.9	45.0	40.0	47.0	45.1	47.9	45.0		
	227	266	1,650	2,383	1,409	3,608	1,392	150	1,542	9,601		

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



Females earned notably higher starting salaries than males in earth sciences (122.4 per cent of males' salaries) and social work (105.6 per cent) and slightly more in engineering (101.9 per cent). Their earnings were equivalent to their male colleagues' salaries in accounting. However, females earned markedly less than males in the fields of optometry (88.2 per cent), dentistry (92.0 per cent) architecture and building (88.9 per cent of males' earnings), art and design (87.8 per cent) and economics and business (91.1 per cent).

Over the years, GCA research has suggested that differences in 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 4 and 5; dentistry, optometry, engineering, earth sciences, medicine and mathematics) shows that only 6.5 per cent of female respondents are within these fields, as opposed to 24.7 per cent of males. The fields occupying ranks six to ten (which include female dominated education and paramedical studies) account for 57.5 per cent of females and 37.6 per cent of males.

While this initial analysis helps to explain the apparent differences, there are many factors that interact to produce observed differences in 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.

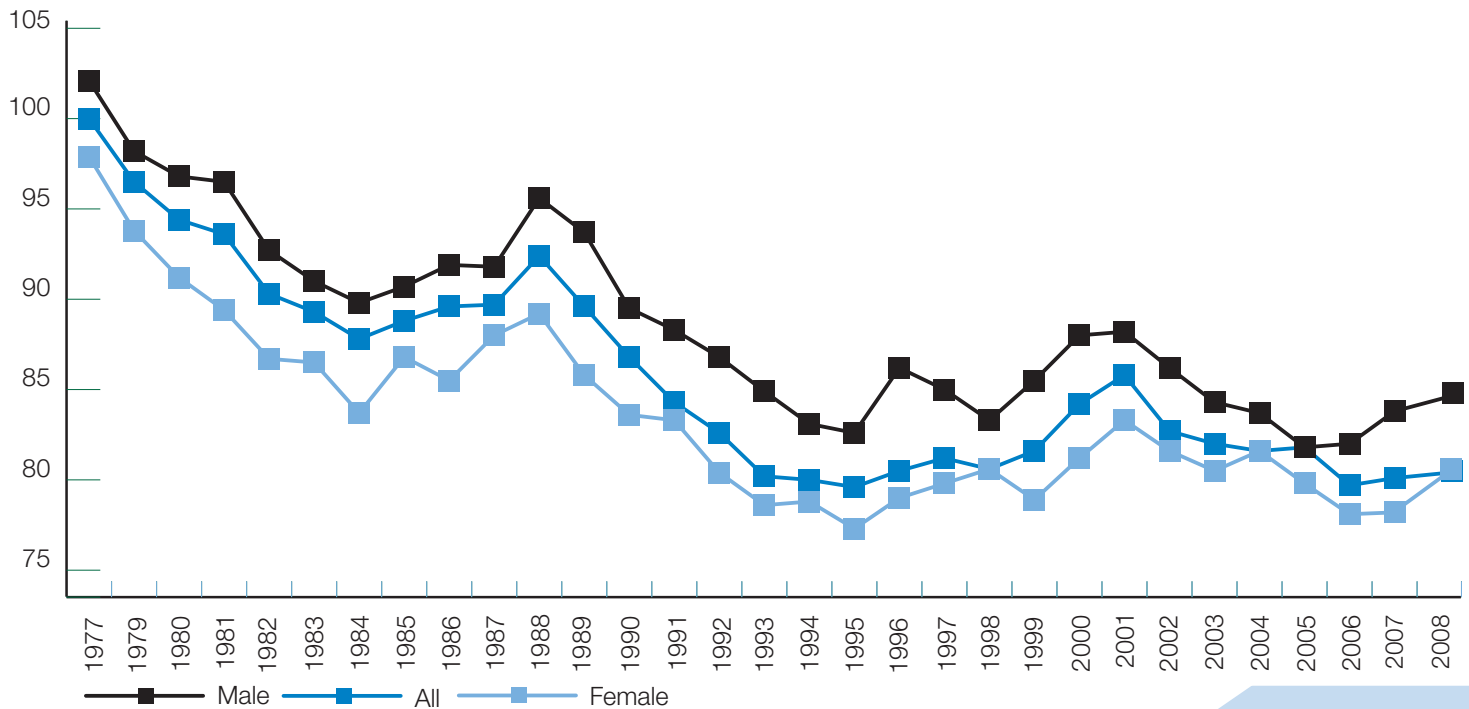


Figure 2: Male, female and all graduates' median starting salaries relative to the annual rate of male average weekly earnings, 1977-2008



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 2008, the top earning fields (dentistry, optometry, engineering, and medicine) have essentially remained unchanged since 2004 (see Table 5).

The minerals boom has seen earth sciences move from eighth ranked in 2003<sup>14</sup> to fourth in 2008. Probably related to this is the rise of physical sciences from 10th to sixth between 2006 and 2008.

Between 2006 and 2008, mathematics moved from seventh to fifth and law moved from eighth to sixth. Accounting has also experienced a notable rise from 14th in 2005 and 2006 to ninth in 2008, while biological sciences moved from 12th to ninth between 2007 and 2008.

14 See *GradStats*, No 12, December 2007

**Table 5: Fields of education ranked according to level of starting salary, 2004-08 (= denotes equal ranking).**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Dentistry	1	1	1	1	1
Optometry	=2	2	2	2	2
Engineering	3	4	4	=4	3
Earth Sciences	6	=7	5	=4	=4
Medicine	=2	3	3	3	=4
Mathematics	=4	6	7	=5	5
Education	=4	5	6	=5	=6
Law	5	=7	=8	6	=6
Physical Sciences	=9	9	=10	10	=6
Computer Science	=7	8	=8	8	7
Paramedical Studies	=7	=7	9	9	=8
Social Work	8	=7	=8	7	=8
Accounting	=11	14	=14	=13	=9
Biological Sciences	=10	=11	=10	12	=9
Psychology	=9	10	=10	11	10
Architecture & Building	12	=13	12	=13	11
Agricultural Science	=11	=13	11	=13	12
Economics, Business	=11	12	=10	=13	13
Social Sciences	13	15	15	14	14
Humanities	=11	16	=14	15	=15
Veterinary Science	=10	=11	13	=13	=15
Art & Design	14	17	16	16	16
Pharmacy (pre-reg)	15	18	17	17	17

## 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 remained at a high level, 88.4 per cent (preliminary), in 2008 (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 fifth 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 has remained in the range 68-71 per cent since 2000.

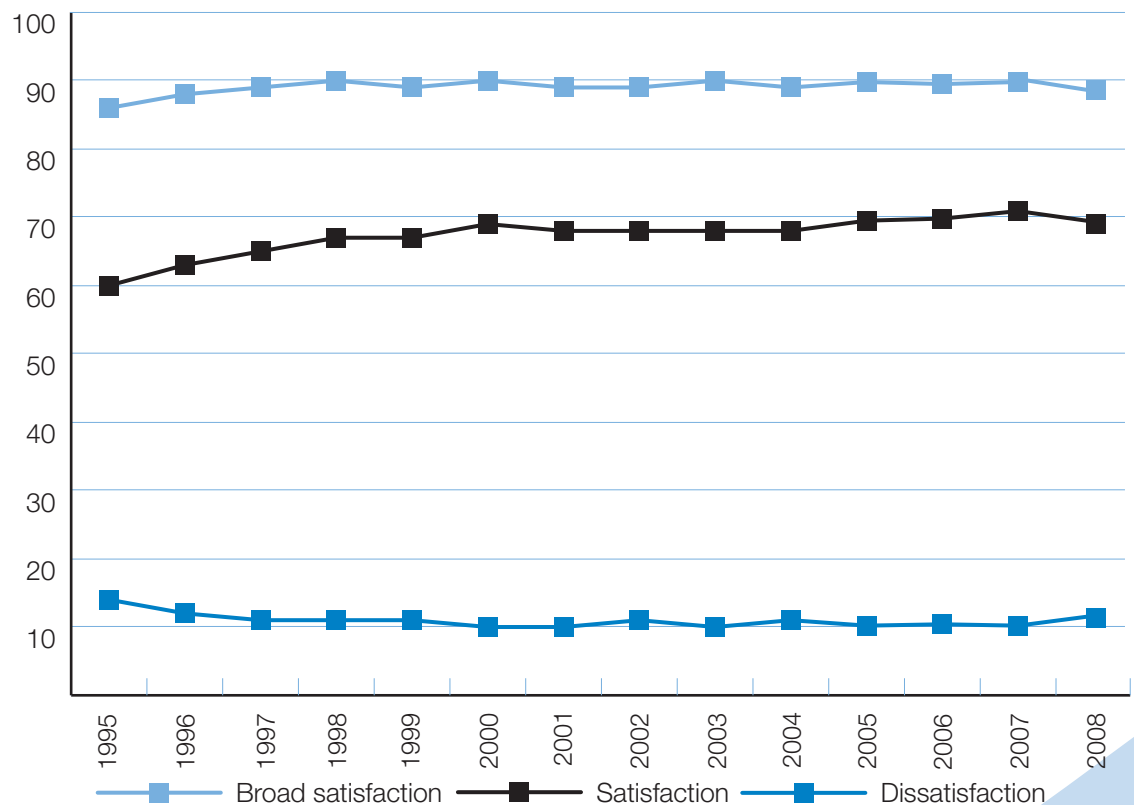


Figure 3: Levels of satisfaction with course, bachelor degree graduates, 1995-2008 (preliminary).