

GradStats

No. 14 December 2009

Employment and Salary Outcomes of Recent Higher Education Graduates

Graduate Careers Australia's (GCA) annual Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) is a study of the activities of new higher education graduates around four months after the completion of their qualifications. In the 2009 AGS, new graduates who completed the requirements for awards in the calendar year 2008 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 2010). Overall, 61.3 per cent of the 158,733 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.

Work, Study, Salaries and Course Satisfaction – Key Outcomes

- Of all bachelor degree graduates either seeking or in full-time employment in 2009 (see Table 1a);
 - 79.2 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (down from 85.2 per cent last year);
 - 13.4 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (up from 9.6 per cent last year); and
 - 7.4 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey (5.2 per cent last year).
- AGS figures on employment prospects for new graduates showed continued improvement between 2004 and 2008. However, 2009 saw a fall in the full-time employment figure due to the global economic downturn (see Figure 1). The 2009 employment figures were gathered in late 2008 and early 2009, and as such may have captured the graduate labour market during the worst of the downturn.
- Between 2004 and 2008 the proportion not working while seeking full-time employment fell 2.2 percentage points from 7.4 per cent in 2004. The 2009 result has seen this figure return to 7.4 per cent (see Figure 1).
- Around one-fifth of respondents (18.3 per cent – down from 19.6 per cent last year), were undertaking further full-time study (see Table 1).
- Despite the economic downturn at the time of the survey, the median annual starting salary (for new bachelor degree graduates who were Australian residents, aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia) increased to \$48,000 in 2009 from \$45,000 in 2008. This was 83.0 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings¹ (\$57,800 at the time of the AGS), up from 80.9 per cent in 2008.
- Males started work on a median salary of \$50,000 (up from \$47,000 in 2008) and females earned \$47,000 (up from \$45,000 in 2008) (see Table 3).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 88.1 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

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

Employment Outcomes & Further Study

The results of the 2009 AGS show that, of all bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment, 79.2 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, with a further 13.4 per cent 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 four months after completing their qualifications. These figures represent a notable slump in graduates' full-time employment prospects after the 2008 survey in which employment figures for new graduates had been their strongest since 1990.²

Despite the economic downturn apparent in late 2008 and early 2009, the proportion of graduates available for full-time employment remained very similar to 2008, indicating that the changed economic environment did not discourage many graduates from seeking full-time employment. Also contrary to what might be expected during a recession, the proportion of graduates continuing in full-time study was down from the previous year (from 19.6 per cent to 18.3 per cent – see Table 1). Generally, between one-fifth and one-quarter of respondents elect to continue in further full-time study.³

The 2009 AGS saw a 1.7 percentage point increase in the total proportion either in or seeking part-time work and not seeking full-time employment (10.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively). This is the highest proportion of bachelor graduates in the part-time labour market (and not available for full-time employment) seen over the past decade.⁴

Of those graduates available for full-time employment, males (79.4 per cent — see Table 1a) were essentially as likely as females (79.0 per cent) to have found work by the time of the survey. Females were less likely than males (6.6 per cent compared with 8.7 per cent) to have been unemployed while seeking full-time employment and they were more likely (14.4 per cent compared with 11.9 per cent) to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment than males. 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.

Males were essentially just as likely as females to have undertaken further full-time study in 2009 after completing their course in the previous year (see Table 1). This is in contrast to recent years, when males have generally been between 1 and 2 percentage points more likely to continue in full-time study than females. 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 figures in recent years.

Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2007-09 (%).

	Available for full-time employment (see Table 1a)	In full-time study	In part-time or casual employment, not seeking full-time employment	Not working, seeking part-time or casual employment only	Unavailable for full-time study or any employment	Total % [†]	Total cases
Males							
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
2009	68.9	18.3	7.4	0.6	4.8	100	23,930
Females							
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
2009	64.2	18.2	11.7	0.7	5.1	100	39,516
Persons*							
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
2009	66.0	18.3	10.1	0.7	5.0	100	63,493

*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.

2. See GCA's *Graduate Destinations 2008* report, Table 2a.

3. Ibid, Table 2.

4. Ibid, Table 2.

Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by sex, 2007-09 (%)

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment	Total % [†]	Total cases	**Had full-time employment before May in final year of study and still with that employer at time of AGS
Males							
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
2009	79.4	8.7	11.9	20.6	100	16,488	18.8
Females							
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
2009	79.0	6.6	14.4	21.0	100	25,372	12.8
Persons*							
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
2009	79.2	7.4	13.4	20.8	100	41,878	15.2

*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.

Table 1a indicates that 15.2 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 (13.1 per cent in 2008). 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.

Looking at the wider population, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures for May 2009⁵ show that, in the general labour

force (aged 15-64), 3.4 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were unemployed (up from 2.0 per cent in 2008 and 2007). The comparative figure for the total population (with or without non-school qualifications) was 6.0 per cent and 8.6 per cent for persons with no post-secondary qualifications. AGS employment figures differ from ABS figures in that the AGS separates those in part-time employment from those in full-time employment while the ABS includes those with any work at all in the 'employed' category. However, these figures do indicate that the longer-term prospects for those with higher education qualifications remain positive.

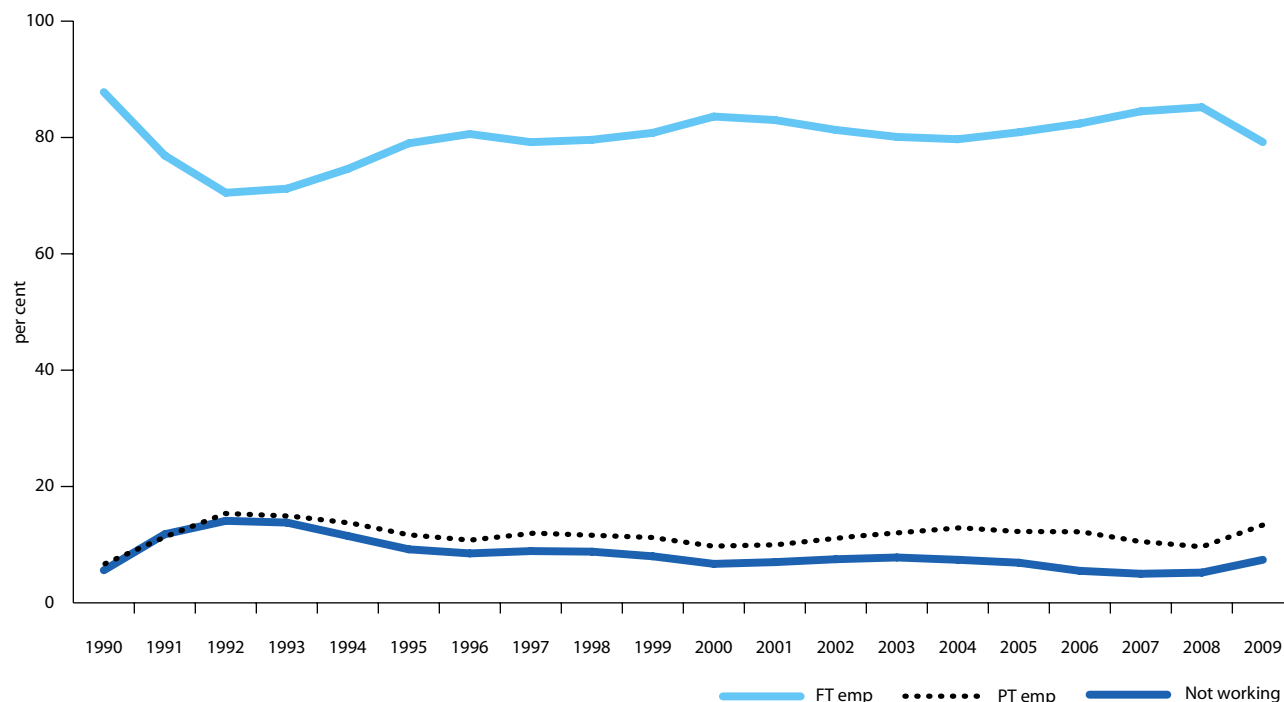


Figure 1: Bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment; percentage in full-time employment, percentage working part-time while seeking full-time employment, percentage not working while seeking full-time employment (1990-2009).

5. Education and Work, May 2009, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 1b: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by various cohorts, 2009 (%).

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment	Total % [†]	Total cases
Total	79.2	7.4	13.4	20.8	100	41,878
Aged less than 25	77.1	7.7	15.1	22.9	100	26,916
Graduates with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background	82.4	7.6	10.0	17.6	100	290
Graduates from a non-English speaking background	71.9	13.5	14.6	28.1	100	5,684
Graduates with a disability	73.3	13.9	12.8	26.7	100	933
Studied mainly full-time	77.8	7.8	14.4	22.2	100	34,254
Studied mainly part-time	85.6	5.5	8.8	14.4	100	7,558
Studied mainly internally (on-campus)	77.9	7.9	14.2	22.1	100	34,426
Studied mainly externally (distance)	89.7	3.8	6.6	10.3	100	3,431
Mixed mode (internal and distance)	81.2	6.4	12.5	18.8	100	3,979
Double/combined degree	82.7	6.1	11.1	17.3	100	5,863
Single degree	78.6	7.6	13.8	21.4	100	35,889
Regional resident	81.1	6.3	12.7	18.9	100	10,034
Capital city resident	78.3	7.8	13.8	21.7	100	29,992

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

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

Those who had studied on a mainly part-time basis were more likely to have been in full-time employment at the time of the survey (85.6 per cent) than those who had studied mainly full-time (77.8 per cent). However, part-time students often have full-time employment while studying and this gives them an artificial 'advantage' in terms of such unadjusted employment figures. Similarly, graduates who studied externally (or by distance – usually part-time students) have seemingly better full-time employment figures than those who studied internally. The figures in Table 1b indicate that graduates from a non-English speaking background were taking longer to find full-time employment compared with the total group of graduates (71.9 per cent compared with 79.2 per cent).

Graduates with a combined or double degree had better employment figures (82.7 per cent in full-time employment) than those with a single degree (78.6 per cent). Respondents living in regional areas were slightly more likely to be in full-time employment than their counterparts in a capital city. Further analysis in the forthcoming report will add useful perspective to the figures shown in Table 1b.

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 96.9 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 (97.6 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 post-initial nursing education (97.4 per cent), initial nursing education (96.3 per cent), civil engineering (94.4 per cent) and dentistry (93.8 per cent).

Respondents in visual/performing arts, life sciences, social sciences and humanities were the most likely to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the AGS. Only around one in two graduates (51.6 per cent) from visual/performing arts who were available for full-time employment had found full-time employment at the time of the survey (the lowest full-time employment rate for this field over the past decade).⁶

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/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 overall the proportion of graduates seeking full-time employment increased from 14.8 per cent in 2008 to 20.8 per cent in 2009, this increase was also evident within almost every field of education in Table 2.⁷ Fields recording the largest increase in the proportion seeking full-time employment were architecture (16.8 percentage point increase), visual/performing arts (15.3 percentage point increase), geology (13.1 percentage point increase) and social sciences and mathematics (12.3 and 12.2 percentage point increases respectively).

Only the fields of education (post/other), nursing (post/initial), dentistry and veterinary science showed no decrease in the proportion in full-time employment (of those available for full-time employment). Of these fields, the only sizeable increase was for education - post/other. However, the small number of responses for this field means the figures fluctuate significantly over time, and year-on-year changes in these figures are not a reliable indicator of labour market trends.

Fields with the highest proportion of graduates in part-time employment while seeking full-time employment were visual/performing arts (32.1 per cent), social sciences (24.5 per cent), life sciences (23.4 per cent) and humanities (21.6 per cent).

Respondents from visual/performing arts (16.3 per cent), aeronautical engineering (13.1 per cent), architecture (12.9 per cent) and mathematics (12.7 per cent) were the most likely to have been unemployed while seeking full-time employment. Similar to previous years, graduates from the fields of education – post/other (50.0 per cent), building (34.9 per cent), law – other⁸ (33.8 per cent) and accounting (26.7 per cent) were most likely to be in full-time employment in their final year of study and still with that employer at the time of the survey.

6. See *GradStats* 13, December 2008.

7. *Ibid*

8. Law-related courses and those beyond initial legal training

Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of education, 2009 (%).

	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	77.0	10.4	12.6	23.0	100	586	22.6
Architecture	75.3	12.9	11.8	24.7	100	380	17.8
Building	83.2	7.3	9.6	16.8	100	386	34.9
Urban\Regional Planning	88.7	7.7	3.6	11.3	100	168	22.1
Humanities	67.3	11.1	21.6	32.7	100	3,949	17.3
Languages	75.3	9.1	15.7	24.7	100	562	13.2
Visual\Performing Arts	51.6	16.3	32.1	48.4	100	1,429	9.5
Social Sciences	65.0	10.5	24.5	35.0	100	343	17.9
Psychology	71.3	9.3	19.5	28.7	100	1,243	14.3
Social Work	81.6	7.0	11.5	18.4	100	820	13.9
Business Studies	76.8	8.4	14.8	23.2	100	6,023	23.5
Accounting	85.1	7.9	7.0	14.9	100	3,023	26.7
Economics	77.4	8.1	14.4	22.6	100	430	13.5
Education - Initial	78.1	3.4	18.5	21.9	100	5,164	9.5
Education - Post\Other	90.5	2.4	7.1	9.5	100	42	50.0
Aeronautical Engineering	78.4	13.1	8.5	21.6	100	176	13.8
Chemical Engineering	82.8	12.0	5.2	17.2	100	233	4.7
Civil Engineering	94.4	3.5	2.1	5.6	100	680	12.9
Electrical Engineering	84.5	11.7	3.8	15.5	100	342	14.5
Electronic/Computer Eng.	78.3	12.2	9.5	21.7	100	304	24.4
Mechanical Engineering	86.2	9.1	4.7	13.8	100	530	12.0
Mining Engineering	92.3	5.5	2.2	7.7	100	91	13.1
Other Engineering	88.9	5.4	5.7	11.1	100	559	17.7
Surveying	92.0	3.5	4.4	8.0	100	113	22.1
Dentistry	93.8	0.8	5.4	6.2	100	130	0.0
Health Other	79.6	5.8	14.6	20.4	100	1,708	13.9
Nursing (Initial)	96.3	1.2	2.5	3.7	100	2,955	4.8
Nursing (Post-Initial)	97.4	0.7	1.8	2.6	100	271	6.4
Pharmacy	97.6	1.4	1.0	2.4	100	508	1.2
Medicine	96.9	2.0	1.0	3.1	100	1,081	0.8
Rehabilitation	89.9	3.0	7.0	10.1	100	1,122	0.4
Law	87.7	5.4	6.9	12.3	100	1,289	21.0
Law Other	81.9	6.8	11.3	18.1	100	513	33.8
Computer Science	80.0	10.4	9.7	20.0	100	1,438	24.3
Life Sciences	64.1	12.5	23.4	35.9	100	2,170	12.7
Mathematics	73.3	12.7	13.9	26.7	100	251	10.9
Chemistry	77.7	10.0	12.2	22.3	100	229	9.6
Physical Sciences	76.1	9.2	14.7	23.9	100	218	15.1
Geology	77.3	7.9	14.8	22.7	100	216	8.4
Veterinary Science	92.1	5.4	2.5	7.9	100	203	0.5
Total %	79.2	7.4	13.4	20.8	100		15.2
Total N	33,165	5,611	3,102	8,713	41,878	41,878	5,030

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

Graduate Starting Salaries

Despite the economic downturn at the time of survey, Table 3 shows the 2009 median annual starting salary for Australian resident new bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia grew to \$48,000 (up from \$45,000 last year). This was 83.0 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (AWE - \$57,800 at the time of the AGS), the highest graduate starting salaries have been relative to AWE since 2001 (when this was 85.8 per cent).

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

In 2009, new male graduates had a median salary of \$50,000, which was 86.5 per cent of AWE, up from 84.5 per cent in 2008. Relative to AWE, the male median starting salary decreased from 88.2 of AWE in 2001 to 81.8 per cent in 2005, before increasing every year since. Median starting salaries for females (\$47,000) were 81.3 per cent of AWE, essentially unchanged from 80.9 per cent in 2008. Relative to AWE, the female median starting salary dropped from a high for the decade of 83.3 per cent in 2001 to a low of 78.1 per cent in 2006. Since that time, the female starting salary as a proportion of AWE has increased to 81.3 per cent in 2009.⁹

In dollar terms, the 2009 median starting salary for all graduates rose by \$3,000 (or 6.7 per cent) from \$45,000 in 2008. The median salary for males rose by \$3,000 from \$47,000 (or 6.4 per cent) while for females it increased by \$2,000 from \$45,000 (or 4.4 per cent).¹⁰

At \$70,000, the median salary for dentistry graduates, although unchanged from 2008, remained the highest for this group of graduates (see Table 3).¹¹ They were followed by graduates from optometry (\$64,500), engineering (\$57,500) and earth sciences and medicine (both \$54,000). 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 (\$35,000) due to the further on-the-job training requirements they must meet for professional registration. Additional research has shown that their salaries grow very strongly upon registration.¹²

Graduates in the art and design field earned \$37,300, 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 2008 and 2009 were for veterinary science (up \$5,000 from \$40,000), optometry (up \$4,500 from \$60,000), earth sciences and medicine (both up \$4,000 from \$50,000) and education (up \$4,000 from \$47,000).¹³

In 2009, none of the field of education groups shown in Table 3 recorded a drop in median salary from 2008, however neither was there any increase in this figure for dentistry, social sciences and social work graduates. These changes will be the subject of more detailed analysis in GCA's *Graduate Salaries 2009* report, to be published in 2010.

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 figure has since fluctuated with a low of 93.3 per cent (in 2007) and a high of 95.7 per cent (in 2008). In 2009, starting salaries for female graduates were 94.0 per cent of the male equivalent.¹⁴

Females earned notably higher starting salaries than males only in the field of optometry (108.3 per cent of males' salaries). Their earnings were equivalent or very similar to their male colleagues' salaries in accounting, biological sciences, computer science, dentistry, education, pharmacy, physical sciences, psychology and social work. Females earned markedly less than males in the fields of architecture and building (85.5 per cent of the male equivalent), art and design (87.5 per cent), social sciences (91.1 per cent of males' earnings), law (91.7 per cent) and medicine (91.8 per cent).

Over the years, GCA research has suggested that overall 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 six ranks in terms of starting salaries (see Tables 3 and 4; dentistry, optometry, engineering, earth sciences, medicine and mathematics) shows that only 6.2 per cent of female respondents are within these fields, as opposed to 27.0 per cent of males. The fields occupying ranks seven to ten (which include female dominated education and paramedical studies) account for 42.2 per cent of females and 23.5 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.

9. See previous editions of *GradStats*.

10. Ibid

11. Ibid

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

13. See previous editions of *GradStats*

14. Ibid

Table 3: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2009 (\$,000). Figures shown below salary figures indicate related number of responses. *

	Aust. Govt	State Govt	Public Health	Total Govt	Prof. Practice.	Industry & Com.	Schools	Higher Ed.	Total Ed.	Total	Males	Females
Accounting	50.0	49.5		49.7	45.0	45.0		44.3	44.3	45.0	45.0	45.0
	19	13		50	605	372		10	16	1,061	508	553
Agricultural Science		47.5		46.0		44.8				45.0	46.0	44.4
		14		21		82				132	59	73
Architecture & Building			50.0	50.0	39.0	45.0				45.0	46.8	40.0
			31	41	109	139				293	156	137
Art & Design						35.0	48.0		48.0	37.3	40.0	35.0
						177			50	272	84	188
Biological Sciences	46.0	46.0		47.3	43.8	40.0	49.0	49.0	49.0	45.0	45.0	44.5
	11	17		90	46	293	12	54	88	572	177	395
Computer Science	52.0			52.0	50.0	48.0	46.0	45.0	46.0	49.6	49.5	49.8
	21			39	29	312		13	26	426	353	73
Dentistry				73.0	67.5					70.0	70.0	70.0
				20	24					45	15	30
Earth Sciences					45.0	57.0				54.0	55.0	53.0
					13	91				119	72	47
Economics, Business	50.0	48.0	50.0	49.0	47.8	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	47.0	44.1
	69	69	17	207	262	1,354	36	41	72	2,014	858	1,156
Education				48.0		37.8	51.5		51.5	51.0	51.0	51.0
				16		58			1,313	1,442	275	1,167
Engineering	53.0	51.7	50.2	52.9	59.0	58.6		50.0	50.0	57.5	58.0	56.0
	40	24	16	91	449	639		12	16	1,225	1,040	185
Humanities	50.0	50.0		49.5	48.0	38.0	50.0	45.8	49.4	42.0	43.0	41.5
	77	30		176	111	587	46	28	134	1,132	288	844
Law	51.0	50.0		50.0	50.0	49.3				50.0	53.0	48.6
	29	23		90	237	70	37			412	137	275
Mathematics				50.0	60.0	52.3	52.0		52.0	52.0	53.5	50.0
				11	10	54			19	95	56	39
Medicine				55.0		45.5				54.0	55.0	50.5
				254		10				271	101	170
Optometry					65.0	59.5				64.5	60.0	65.0
					32	10				46	15	31
Paramedical Studies	47.0	51.0	54.6	47.0	48.0	46.0	48.6	48.0	48.5	47.0	48.0	47.0
	11	22	16	1,380	199	387		15	55	2,165	297	1,868
Pharmacy (pre-reg)				47.0		34.0				35.0	35.0	35.0
				78		262				347	121	226
Physical Sciences				48.0		45.5			48.0	48.0	48.0	47.5
				10		92			13	130	72	58
Psychology	47.0	46.9		47.0	45.0	41.0	52.0	46.0	50.8	45.0	45.0	45.0
	15	18		60	35	140	16	19	48	355	57	298
Social Sciences		44.0		47.0	37.0	40.0	40.0		43.5	42.0	45.0	41.0
		12		70	11	60	39		16	182	55	127
Social Work		48.7		49.0		44.0				45.0	45.0	45.0
		14		49		15				149	11	138
Veterinary Science					45.0					45.0	47.5	45.0
					70					81	10	71
All Fields	50.0	48.0	50.0	48.0	49.0	45.0	51.0	47.8	50.0	48.0	50.0	47.0
	327	290	124	2,773	2,272	5,209	219	230	1,885	12,966	4,817	8,149
Males	51.9	49.8	50.0	50.0	50.0	48.0	50.0	48.0	50.0	50.0		
	134	105	45	668	1,102	2,427	82	73	401	4,817		
Females	49.8	48.0	49.0	47.8	45.8	40.0	51.0	47.6	50.1	47.0		
	193	185	79	2,105	1,170	2,782	137	157	1,484	8,149		

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

Table 4: Fields of education ranked according to level of starting salary, 2005-09 (= denotes equal ranking).

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Dentistry	1	1	1	1	1
Optometry	2	2	2	2	2
Engineering	4	4	=4	3	3
Medicine	3	3	3	=4	=4
Earth Sciences	=7	5	=4	=4	=4
Mathematics	6	7	=6	6	6
Education	5	6	=6	=7	7
Law	=7	=8	8	=7	8
Computer Science	11	=8	10	10	9
Physical Sciences	12	=12	12	=7	10
Paramedical Studies	=7	11	11	=11	11
Social work	=7	=8	9	=11	=12
Biological Sciences	14	=12	14	=13	=12
Accounting	18	=19	15	=13	=12
Psychology	13	=12	13	15	=12
Architecture & Building	18	17	=15	16	=12
Agricultural Science	=15	16	=15	17	=12
Economics, Business	=15	=12	=15	18	=12
Veterinary Science	=15	18	=15	=20	=12
Social Sciences	20	21	20	19	=20
Humanities	21	=19	21	=20	=20
Art & Design	22	22	22	22	22
Pharmacy	23	23	23	23	23

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 4).

Over the past five years, fields of education which saw notable improvements in their ranking in terms of starting salaries were accounting and architecture and building, both climbing from eighteenth equal to twelfth equal. In contrast, the starting salary for social work graduates showed steady decline in this ranking, from seventh equal to twelfth equal.

Graduate Satisfaction

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) has been in use since 1993 and is an instrument developed to measure graduates' satisfaction with their study experiences. Broad satisfaction was at a high level in 2009 (88.1 per cent), and correspondingly dissatisfaction was low. These figures are similar to previous results over the past decade. The broad satisfaction figure represents the percentage of respondents answering '3', '4' or '5' on a five-point scale (with the fifth point indicating highest satisfaction).

Job Search Strategies

Of those graduates that had looked for and found full-time employment, over one in five (22.5 per cent) first found out about their current job via an advertisement on the internet (see Table 5). While this figure reflects the importance of scouring online vacancies in today's job market, it is notable that over three-quarters of graduates in full-time employment did not first find out about their employment via this method. Demonstrating the diversity in how graduates find out about their full-time jobs, Table 5 suggests job seekers need to cast their nets wide. It should also be noted that this doesn't necessarily indicate

that online advertisements are the most effective way to find a graduate job, but simply that this was the single most common way in which graduates in full-time employment first learned of their current job.

Of the 12 job search methods identified in Table 5, over half of graduates in full-time employment learnt of their current employment first through one of four strategies: advertisement on the internet (22.5 per cent), family or friends (13.9 per cent), university or college careers service (10.4 per cent) and approaching an employer directly (10.1 per cent).

Table 5: How graduates in full-time employment first found out about their employment: bachelor degree graduates who had actively sought employment in the year prior to the AGS, and who were in full-time employment at the time of the AGS, 2009 (%)

	Per cent	Total cases
Advertisement on the internet	22.5	4,439
Family or friends	13.9	2,738
University or college careers service	10.4	2,055
Approached employer directly	10.1	1,992
Advertisement in a newspaper or other print media	7.1	1,395
Other	6.9	1,353
Careers fair or information session	6.7	1,314
Approached by an employer	6.2	1,223
Work contacts or networks	6.0	1,191
Other university or college source (such as faculties or lecturers)	5.4	1,070
Employment agency	3.6	702
Via résumé posted on the internet	1.3	257
Total	100	19,729

Need more information?

Further details about graduate destinations, graduate salaries and the CEQ can be found in the forthcoming reports *Graduate Destinations 2009*, *Graduate Salaries 2009*, *Postgraduate Destinations 2009*, *Graduate Course Experience 2009* and *Postgraduate Research Experience 2009*, which will be released progressively during 2010. To order copies, please call GCA on (03) 9605 3700 or visit our online shop at www.graduatecareers.com.au.

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

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

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