

# GradStats

JUNE 2012

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 2011 AGS, new graduates who completed the requirements for awards in the calendar year 2010 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 national data concerning the destinations of Australian resident bachelor degree graduates. Overall, 61.9 per cent of the over 168,000 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).

## Survey Highlights

No notable change was seen in the 2011 figures for all bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment (see *Table 1a*)

- 76.3 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (comparable to 76.2 per cent in 2010, and down from 79.2 per cent in 2009 and 85.2 per cent in 2008)
- 14.9 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (comparable to 15.1 per cent in 2010, and up from 13.4 per cent in 2009 and 9.6 per cent in 2008)
- 8.7 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey (comparable to 8.6 per cent in 2010, and up from 7.4 per cent in 2009 and 5.2 per cent in 2008).
- While employment prospects for new graduates showed continued improvement between 2004 and 2008, the global economic downturn negatively impacted these figures in 2009 and immediate employment prospects have remained flat since then (see *Figure 1*). While many anticipated a recovery in the labour market for new graduates in 2010 and 2011, this did not eventuate, and these new employment figures suggest that recruiters have remained cautious in their hiring plans following the global economic downturn.
- Of those still seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey (23.7 per cent of those available for full-time employment), around two in every three (or 14.9 per cent of those available for full-time employment) had found part-time employment while the remainder (8.7 per cent) were without any work (see *Table 1a*).

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## Employment outcomes and further study

- Around one-fifth of respondents (19.4 per cent – up slightly from 19.0 per cent in 2010), 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 increased to \$50,000 from \$49,000 in 2010. This was 78.1 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings (\$64,000 at the time of the AGS<sup>1</sup>), down from 79.8 per cent in 2010 (see *Figure 2*).
- Males started full-time work on a median salary of \$52,000 (up from \$50,000 in 2010) while females in full-time employment earned \$50,000 (up from \$48,000 in 2010, see *Table 3*).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 93.7 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.
- Just over half of the graduates in full-time employment first learned of their current employment through one of three strategies: searching advertisements on the internet (26.4 per cent), talking to family or friends (14.5 per cent) and visiting university or college careers services (10.3 per cent).

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Males started full-time work on a median salary of \$52,000 ... while females in full-time employment earned \$50,000 ...

Females were less likely than males ... to have been unemployed ... and more likely to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment ...

The results of the 2011 AGS show that, of all domestic bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment, 76.3 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, with a further 14.9 per cent working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (see *Table 1a*).

An additional 8.7 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment four months after completing their qualifications. These figures indicate that the labour market prospects of new bachelor degree graduates did not change notably between 2010 and 2011, with figures remaining flat following the global economic downturn.

Within an economic climate that continues to reflect concerns regarding problems in Europe and the potential for a second global economic downturn, the proportion of graduates available for full-time employment fell between 2009 and 2011, from 66.0 per cent to 64.8 per cent (see *Table 1*), suggesting that a number of new graduates were discouraged from seeking a place in the full-time labour force.

In the same period, and probably related to the same economic uncertainty, the proportion of graduates continuing in further full-time study rose from 18.3 per cent in 2009 to 19.0 per cent in 2010 and 19.4 per cent in 2011. Historically, between one-fifth and one-quarter of respondents elect to continue in further full-time study<sup>2</sup>.

As in the general population, part-time employment is an important employment option for some new graduates. In 2011, 10.7 per cent of respondents were either in part-time employment or seeking part-time work and not seeking full-time employment (10.0 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively – see *Table 1*). These are the highest proportions of bachelor graduates in the part-time labour market (and not available for full-time employment) seen in the past decade<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See related discussion in *Graduate Destinations* reports available from [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au)

Similarly, Table 1a shows that, of graduates still seeking a full-time position at the time of the survey, around two in every three were working in a part-time position while doing so.

Of those graduates available for full-time employment, males (75.8 per cent — see Table 1a) were less likely than females (76.7 per cent) to have found a full-time position by the time of the survey. Females were less likely than males (7.6 per cent compared with 10.4 per cent) to have been unemployed while seeking full-time employment and were more likely to have been working on a part-time

or casual basis while seeking full-time employment (15.7 per cent compared with 13.8 per cent). This latter 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 part-time professional employment and previous Graduate Destinations reports have shown that females are more likely to be in professional part-time employment than males<sup>2</sup>.

Males were slightly more likely than females to have undertaken further full-

time study in 2011 after completing their course in the previous year (see Table 1).

Table 1a indicates that 14.1 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position early (before 1 May 2010) in their final year of study. As in previous years, males were notably 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.

<sup>2</sup> See related discussion in *Graduate Destinations* reports available from [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au)

**Table 1:** Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2009-11 (%)

	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 % <sup>†</sup>	Total cases
<b>Males</b>							
2009	<sup>^</sup> 68.9	<sup>~</sup> 18.3	<sup>^~</sup> 7.4	<sup>~</sup> 0.6	<sup>^</sup> 4.8	100	23,930
2010	<sup>^~</sup> 67.1	<sup>^~</sup> 19.8	<sup>^</sup> 7.3	<sup>^~</sup> 0.4	<sup>~</sup> 5.4	100	24,438
2011	<sup>^</sup> 67.7	<sup>^</sup> 19.8	<sup>^</sup> 7.2	<sup>^~</sup> 0.5	<sup>^~</sup> 4.8	100	26,112
<b>Females</b>							
2009	<sup>^~</sup> 64.2	<sup>~</sup> 18.2	<sup>^~</sup> 11.7	<sup>~</sup> 0.7	<sup>^~</sup> 5.1	100	39,516
2010	<sup>^~</sup> 63.3	<sup>^</sup> 18.6	<sup>^</sup> 11.8	<sup>^</sup> 0.7	<sup>~</sup> 5.7	100	40,159
2011	<sup>^</sup> 63.0	<sup>^</sup> 19.1	<sup>^</sup> 11.7	<sup>^</sup> 0.8	<sup>^</sup> 5.5	100	42,027
<b>Persons*</b>							
2009	66.0	<sup>~</sup> 18.3	<sup>~</sup> 10.1	<sup>~</sup> 0.7	<sup>~</sup> 5.0	100	63,493
2010	<sup>~</sup> 64.7	<sup>~</sup> 19.0	10.1	<sup>~</sup> 0.6	<sup>~</sup> 5.6	100	65,045
2011	64.8	19.4	10.0	<sup>~</sup> 0.7	<sup>~</sup> 5.2	100	68,205

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

<sup>†</sup> Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

<sup>~</sup> This figure is significantly different to that for the previous year ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>^</sup> Figures marked thus indicate a significant difference for males and females in the same year ( $p < 0.05$ ).

# Employment outcomes and further study

(continued)

**Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by sex, 2009-11 (%)**

	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 % <sup>†</sup>	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>							
2009	~ 79.4	^~ 8.7	^~ 11.9	~ 20.6	100	16,488	18.8
^ 2010	^~ 75.4	^~ 10.6	^~ 13.9	^~ 24.6	100	16,399	20.0
2011	^75.8	^ 10.4	^ 13.8	^24.2	100	17,671	17.5
<b>Females</b>							
2009	~ 79.0	^~ 6.6	^~ 14.4	~ 21.0	100	25,372	12.8
^ 2010	^~ 76.8	^~ 7.3	^~ 15.9	^~ 23.2	100	25,646	13.0
2011	^76.7	^ 7.6	^ 15.7	^23.3	100	26,459	11.9
<b>Persons*</b>							
2009	~ 79.2	~ 7.4	~ 13.4	~ 20.8	100	41,878	15.2
2010	~ 76.2	~ 8.6	~ 15.1	~ 23.8	100	42,081	15.7
2011	76.3	8.7	14.9	23.7	100	44,176	14.1

\*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.

~ This figure is significantly different to that for the previous year (p. < 0.05).

^ Figures marked thus indicate a significant difference for males and females in the same year (p. < 0.05).

**Table 1b: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by various cohorts, 2011 (%)**

	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 % <sup>†</sup>	Total cases
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.3</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>44,176</b>
Aged less than 25	74.7	8.9	16.4	25.3	100	28,904
Graduates with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background	86.8	6.5	6.7	13.2	100	403
Graduates from a non-English speaking background	67.0	15.8	17.2	33.0	100	7,275
Graduates with a disability	66.2	16.7	17.1	33.8	100	1,127
Studied mainly full-time*	75.2	9.2	15.7	24.8	100	38,104
Studied mainly part-time*	83.7	6.1	10.2	16.3	100	5,998
Studied mainly internally (on-campus) <sup>^</sup>	75.2	9.2	15.6	24.8	100	37,944
Studied mainly externally (distance) <sup>^</sup>	86.6	5.3	8.0	13.4	100	3,255
Mixed mode (internal and distance)	79.5	6.8	13.7	20.5	100	2,929
Double/combined degree <sup>~</sup>	81.4	6.8	11.9	18.6	100	4,861
Single degree <sup>~</sup>	75.7	9.0	15.3	24.3	100	38,835
Regional resident <sup>#</sup>	78.8	7.4	13.7	21.2	100	10,610
Capital city resident <sup>#</sup>	75.4	9.2	15.4	24.6	100	32,143

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

\* ^~ # Full-time employment figures within these categories were significantly different from each other (p. < 0.05).

Table 1b shows employment figures for various bachelor degree sub-groups.

As a general rule, some caution is required when comparing these preliminary summary results as they can be affected by other variables not taken into account here.

For example, those who had studied on a mainly part-time basis were notably more likely to have been in full-time employment at the time of the survey (83.7 per cent) than those who had studied mainly full-time (75.2 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 better full-time employment figures than those who studied internally.

Figures for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates should be interpreted with a little caution because relatively small numbers of respondents are involved, however it is worth noting that most editions of GradStats have observed similar figures.

The figures in Table 1b indicate that graduates from a non-English speaking background (67.0 per cent) were taking longer to find full-time employment

compared with the total group of graduates, as were those who identified as having a disability (66.2 per cent).

Graduates with a combined or double degree had better employment figures (81.4 per cent in full-time employment) than those with a single degree (75.7 per cent). Respondents living in regional areas were also more likely to be in full-time employment than their counterparts in a capital city (78.8 per cent compared with 75.4 per cent).

Table 2 shows the breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment by field of education, taking its focus from the 'available for full-time employment' group in Table 1.

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 97.9 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 (97.3 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 (97.3 per cent), dentistry (93.9 per cent), surveying (92.9 per cent) and nursing – initial training (92.0 per cent).

Respondents in visual\performing arts, education - post\other, life sciences, chemistry, psychology, humanities, social sciences, and languages were the most likely to have been seeking full-time employment at the time of the AGS (all with more than one-in-three doing so). It is worth noting however, that the graduates of some fields of education can always take longer to find full-time employment than those from other fields, and this slower labour market uptake of graduates of such fields reflects more on the state of the labour market and not on the quality of the graduates or their study choices.

Additionally, not all employment reported by graduates will necessarily be in the area in which the graduate trained. Employment opportunities in the occupations for which some graduates have 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.

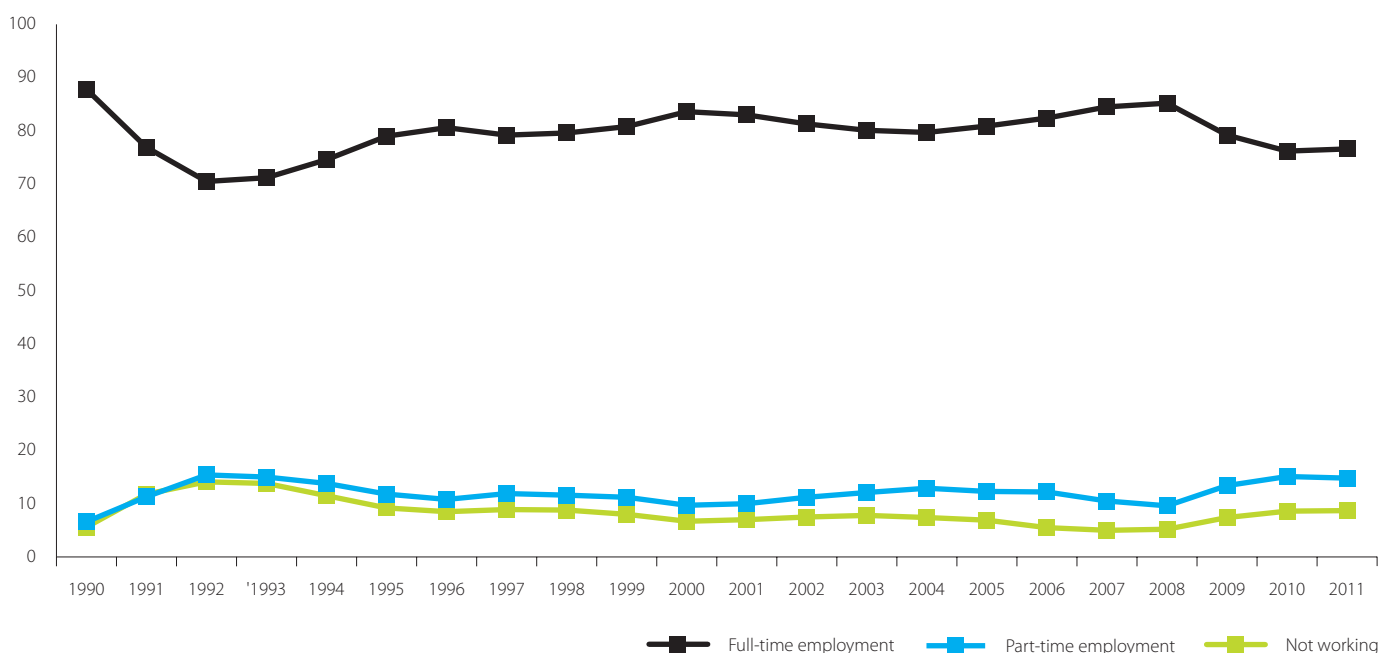


Figure 1: Bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment; percentage in full-time employment, percentage working part-time while seeking full-time employment, percentage not working while seeking full-time employment (1990-2011).

**Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of education, 2011 (%)**

	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 % <sup>†</sup>	Total cases	Had current full-time employment before May in final year of study and still with that employer at time of AGS*
Agriculture	70.0	10.7	19.3	30.0	100	560	19.4
Architecture	68.5	12.5	19.0	31.5	100	343	7.7
Building	81.8	8.7	9.5	18.2	100	632	28.0
Urban\Regional Planning	84.1	5.9	10.0	15.9	100	239	18.4
Humanities	64.5	12.6	22.9	35.5	100	4,118	18.8
Languages	65.3	13.9	20.8	34.7	100	567	12.7
Visual\Performing Arts	52.5	17.8	29.7	47.5	100	1,457	8.1
Social Sciences	63.7	12.0	24.3	36.3	100	391	18.1
Psychology	63.7	11.3	25.0	36.3	100	1,364	16.0
Social Work	77.3	8.9	13.9	22.7	100	880	18.2
Business Studies	76.2	8.9	14.9	23.8	100	7,127	20.1
Accounting	78.3	10.4	11.3	21.7	100	3,293	23.3
Economics	77.0	9.6	13.4	23.0	100	530	10.5
Education - Initial	74.3	4.5	21.2	25.7	100	4,795	9.1
Education - Post\Other	53.8	7.7	38.5	46.2	100	26	28.6
Aeronautical Engineering	74.7	17.3	8.0	25.3	100	150	16.1
Chemical Engineering	71.7	16.3	12.0	28.3	100	233	1.8
Civil Engineering	89.1	7.5	3.4	10.9	100	841	12.6
Electrical Engineering	85.9	6.8	7.4	14.1	100	311	13.9
Electronic/Computer Engineering	82.2	9.5	8.3	17.8	100	241	23.7
Mechanical Engineering	87.1	8.0	4.9	12.9	100	575	11.8
Mining Engineering	97.3	1.8	0.9	2.7	100	110	6.5
Other Engineering	82.3	10.6	7.1	17.7	100	661	11.6
Surveying	92.9	4.5	2.7	7.1	100	112	30.8
Dentistry	93.9	2.0	4.1	6.1	100	196	0.0
Health Other	77.0	8.8	14.2	23.0	100	1,846	12.2
Nursing (Initial)	92.0	2.4	5.6	8.0	100	3,102	4.5
Nursing (Post-Initial)	84.9	5.3	9.9	15.1	100	304	4.3
Pharmacy	97.3	1.4	1.2	2.7	100	490	0.2
Medicine	97.9	0.9	1.2	2.1	100	1,303	0.7
Rehabilitation	87.5	4.4	8.1	12.5	100	1,233	0.3
Law	82.7	8.0	9.3	17.3	100	1,279	23.7
Law Other	77.0	8.6	14.4	23.0	100	431	41.0
Computer Science	77.8	11.3	10.9	22.2	100	1,385	22.7
Life Sciences	61.5	13.6	24.9	38.5	100	2,004	9.6
Mathematics	71.9	10.7	17.4	28.1	100	224	13.7
Chemistry	61.7	18.1	20.1	38.3	100	149	14.1
Physical Sciences	70.2	14.0	15.7	29.8	100	178	18.4
Geology	84.0	7.2	8.7	16.0	100	263	5.0
Veterinary Science	88.4	7.3	4.3	11.6	100	233	0.0
<b>Total %</b>	<b>76.3</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>14.1</b>
<b>Total N</b>	<b>33,725</b>	<b>3,862</b>	<b>6,589</b>	<b>10,451</b>	<b>44,176</b>	<b>44,176</b>	<b>4,757</b>

<sup>†</sup> Total % may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

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

## Graduate starting salaries

Table 3 shows the 2011 median annual starting salary for Australian resident new bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia as being \$50,000 (up from \$49,000 last year). This was 78.1 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (MAWE - \$64,000) at the time of the AGS.

Probably reflecting the effects of continued recruiter uncertainty in the backwash of the global financial crisis, this represents a notable downturn compared with the 2009 starting salary being 83.0 per cent of MAWE<sup>1</sup>, which was the highest that graduate starting salaries have been relative to MAWE since 2001 (see Figure 2).

In 2011, new male graduates earned a median salary of \$52,000, which was 81.3 per cent of MAWE, showing no notable change from 81.4 per cent in 2010 but well down from 86.5 per cent in 2009. At the same time, new female graduates started work on a median salary of \$50,000 which was 78.1 per cent of MAWE (78.2 per cent in 2010). Figure 2 shows graduate starting salaries for males, females and all graduates relative to MAWE since 1977, with a notable fall against MAWE between 2009 and 2010.

In dollar terms, the 2011 median starting salary for all graduates rose by \$1,000 (or 2.0 per cent) from \$49,000 in 2010 while the MAWE figure rose from \$61,400 to \$64,000 (or by 4.2 per cent) over the same period. The median salary for males rose \$2,000 from \$50,000 (4.0 per cent) over the same period, while for females it increased by \$2,000 from \$48,000 (or 4.2 per cent).<sup>2</sup> In 2011, females' salaries were 96.2 per cent of males' salaries.

At \$80,000, the median starting salary for dentistry graduates increased by \$5,000 between 2010 and 2011 (after also increasing by that amount between 2009 and 2010), and remained the highest for this group of graduates (see Tables 3 and 4). In a ranking based on starting salaries, they were followed by graduates from optometry (\$70,000, no change from 2010), earth sciences (\$65,000, up from \$54,000), engineering (\$60,000, up from \$56,000 in 2010), and medicine (\$58,500, up from \$55,000).

Graduates in a number of fields must meet additional training requirements in order to gain professional registration, which can sometimes result in relatively low starting salaries. As an example, pharmacy graduates (pre-registration) earned low starting salaries (\$37,000) due to the further on-the-job training requirements they must meet for professional registration. GCA's Beyond Graduation Survey (BGS) has shown that salaries for bachelor degree graduates grow very strongly in the few years following the AGS, with overall growth of over 13 per cent seen one year out, and growth of 35 per cent seen three years after these initial AGS data are collected<sup>3</sup>.

Graduates in the art and design field earned \$40,000, but 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 rise in graduate starting salary between 2010 and 2011 was for earth sciences graduates who enjoyed an increase of \$11,000 or 20.4 per cent (from \$54,000 to \$65,000). This field saw no increase between 2009 and 2010. Other notable increases in 2011 were seen in the fields of dentistry (up \$5,000 from \$75,000) and engineering (up \$4,000 from \$56,000). In 2011, the fields of optometry, physical sciences and veterinary science experienced no increase from 2010.

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 2011, the top earning fields (dentistry, optometry, earth sciences, engineering and medicine) have essentially remained unchanged since 2007 (see Table 4).

Graduates in the art and design field ... can take longer to find relevant full-time employment in [their] areas ... due to the small number of available positions.

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.

2 See *GradStats 2010* for relevant 2010 salaries figures.

3 The *2010 Beyond Graduation Survey* report can be downloaded from the GCA web site at [graduatecareers.com.au/research](http://graduatecareers.com.au/research).



**Table 3: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2011 (\$,000). Figures shown below salary figures indicate related number of responses.\***

	Aust. Govt	State Govt	Public Health	Total Govt	Prof. Practice.	Industry / Commerce	Schools	Higher Ed.	Total Ed.	Total	Males	Females
Accounting	53.0 37	52.0 17	*	53.0 71	46.0 528	46.3 388	*	*	46.0 15	<b>47.0</b> <b>1,018</b>	48.0 469	46.0 549
Agricultural Science	*	*		50.0 13	*	45.0 87	*	*	*	<b>45.6</b> <b>116</b>	45.0 49	46.0 67
Architecture & Building	*	*	*	55.0 55	39.8 112	47.0 217	*	*	*	<b>46.0</b> <b>389</b>	50.0 235	43.0 154
Art & Design	*	*	*	*	36.5 10	38.0 172	54.0 40	*	54.0 45	<b>40.0</b> <b>257</b>	42.0 72	40.0 185
Biological Sciences	55.0 11	47.3 12	50.9 41	50.9 76	42.0 43	44.0 279	52.0 49	51.3 39	52.0 88	<b>47.0</b> <b>521</b>	47.8 194	47.0 327
Computer Science	55.0 29	*	*	54.7 39	53.0 29	50.0 279	49.0 14	52.0 10	50.4 24	<b>51.0</b> <b>386</b>	51.5 320	50.0 66
Dentistry	*		73.0 38	74.0 39	83.2 43	*	*	*		<b>80.0</b> <b>89</b>	80.0 27	75.0 62
Earth Sciences	*	*		59.0 13	54.0 10	70.0 118	*	*	*	<b>65.0</b> <b>144</b>	70.0 90	60.0 54
Economics, Business	53.0 85	51.0 32	48.0 10	51.7 176	50.0 306	45.0 1,634	41.5 24	50.0 39	48.0 63	<b>47.0</b> <b>2,315</b>	50.0 1,032	45.0 1,283
Education	*	*	*	53.0 17	*	40.0 59	55.0 1,141	*	55.0 1,147	<b>55.0</b> <b>1,271</b>	55.0 229	55.0 1,042
Engineering	58.0 48	56.0 21	*	57.0 91	60.0 380	61.0 696	*	*	*	<b>60.0</b> <b>1,207</b>	60.0 996	60.0 211
Humanities	50.4 79	49.0 41	50.7 10	50.0 181	51.0 95	40.0 613	53.0 89	49.0 25	52.0 114	<b>44.0</b> <b>1,117</b>	44.0 290	43.0 827
Law	53.0 32	*	*	53.0 62	50.0 210	51.0 94	*	*	*	<b>51.0</b> <b>376</b>	52.0 131	50.0 245
Mathematics	*	*	*	52.6 14	*	52.0 46	55.0 23	*	55.0 25	<b>55.0</b> <b>94</b>	55.0 49	55.0 45
Medicine		*	60.0 332	60.0 335	*	46.5 20	*	*	*	<b>58.5</b> <b>366</b>	60.0 150	58.0 216
Optometry			*	*	70.0 34	*	*	*		<b>70.0</b> <b>42</b>	72.0 13	70.0 29
Paramedical Studies	*	53.5 11	50.0 1,310	50.0 1,334	52.2 226	49.0 357	51.6 26	*	51.6 32	<b>50.0</b> <b>2,107</b>	52.0 335	50.0 1,772
Pharmacy (pre-reg)	*		50.0 80	50.0 81		35.0 231				<b>37.0</b> <b>315</b>	37.0 110	37.4 205
Physical Sciences	44.0 15	*	*	45.0 19	*	50.0 50	50.0 10	*	50.0 14	<b>50.0</b> <b>92</b>	50.0 58	53.0 34
Psychology	53.5 11	45.0 11	55.0 15	53.0 56	41.0 28	45.0 135	54.0 16	51.0 13	53.4 29	<b>47.4</b> <b>300</b>	50.0 48	47.0 252
Social Sciences	*	*		49.5 34	*	39.8 51	55.0 10	*	55.0 12	<b>43.0</b> <b>125</b>	42.0 26	44.0 99
Social Work	*	*	52.0 29	52.0 44	*	45.0 23	*	*	*	<b>50.0</b> <b>141</b>	49.0 14	50.0 127
Veterinary Science	*	*		*	45.0 77	*	*	*		<b>45.0</b> <b>83</b>	43.0 18	45.0 65
All Fields	53.0 390	51.0 193	52.0 1,883	52.0 2,762	50.0 2,164	46.0 5,562	55.0 1,463	50.8 168	55.0 1,631	<b>50.0</b> <b>12,871</b>	52.0 4,955	50.0 7,916
Males	53.0 208	53.5 72	56.0 393	54.6 783	52.0 1,013	50.0 2,617	55.0 308	52.0 54	55.0 362	<b>52.0</b> <b>4,955</b>		
Females	53.0 182	50.1 121	51.0 1,490	51.0 1,797	50.0 1,151	44.0 2,945	55.0 1,155	50.0 114	55.0 1,269	<b>50.0</b> <b>7,916</b>		

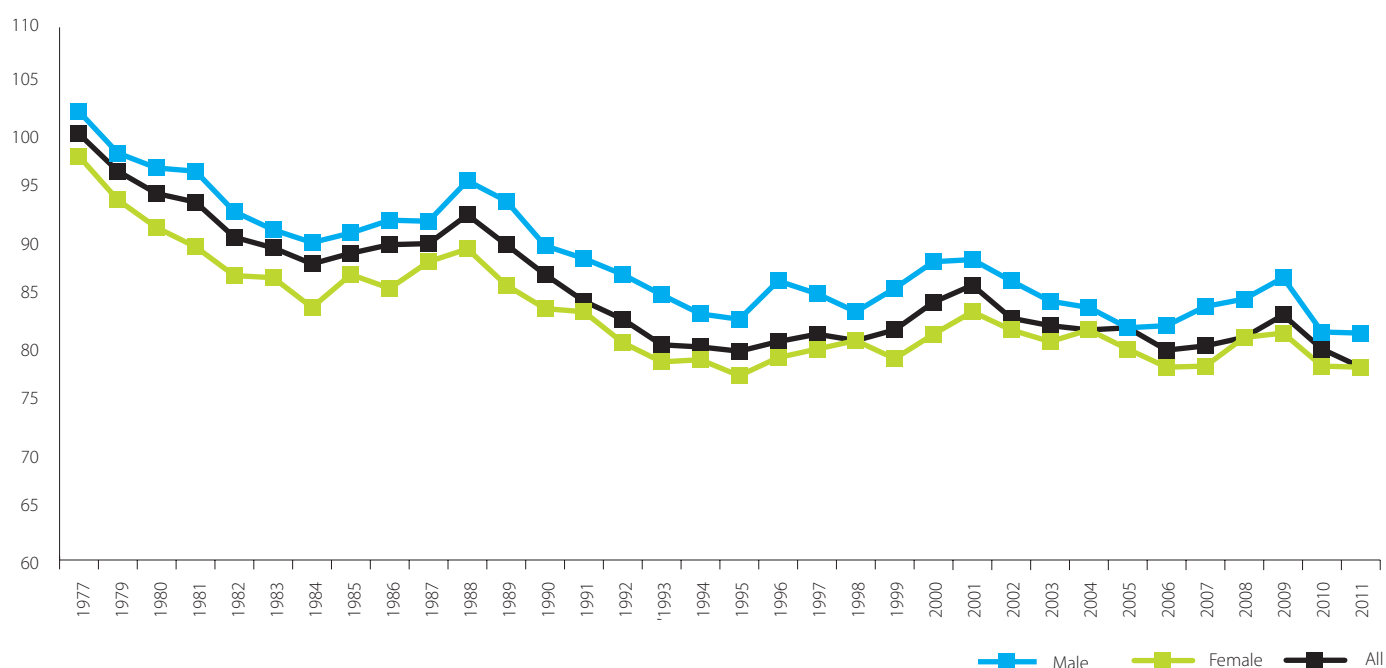
\* Salaries based on fewer than 10 cases not shown. 'Total Government', 'Total Education' and 'Total' columns include cases not shown in related constituent columns.



**Table 4:** Fields of education ranked according to level of starting salary, 2007-11

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Dentistry	1	1	1	1	1
Optometry	2	2	2	2	2
Earth Sciences	=4	=4	=4	5	3
Engineering	=4	3	3	3	4
Medicine	3	=4	=4	4	5
Education	=6	=7	7	6	=6
Mathematics	=6	6	6	7	=6
Computer Science	10	10	9	=8	=8
Law	8	=7	8	11	=8
Paramedical Studies	11	=11	11	=8	=10
Physical Sciences	12	=7	10	=8	=10
Social work	9	=11	=12	13	=10
Psychology	13	15	=12	12	13
Accounting	15	=13	=12	=14	=14
Biological Sciences	14	=13	=12	=14	=14
Economics, Business	=15	18	=12	=14	=14
Architecture & Building	=15	16	=12	=14	17
Agricultural Science	=15	17	=12	=14	18
Veterinary Science	=15	=20	=12	=14	19
Humanities	21	=20	=20	21	20
Social Sciences	20	19	=20	20	21
Art & Design	22	22	22	22	22
Pharmacy (pre-reg)	23	23	23	23	23

= denotes equal ranking.



**Figure 2:** Male, female and all graduates' median starting salaries relative to the annual rate of full-time average weekly earnings, 1997-2011

## Graduating starting salaries

{continued}

Females earned notably higher starting salaries than males in the field of physical sciences (\$3,000 more) and slightly more in a handful of other fields. However, this is outweighed by males' greater earnings in most fields including, most notably, earth sciences (\$10,000 more than females), architecture and building (\$7,000 more) and dentistry and economics and business (both \$5,000 more for males).

Over the years, GCA research has suggested that overall differences in median 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 3 and 4*; dentistry, optometry, earth sciences, engineering, and medicine) shows that only 7.2 per cent of female respondents are within these fields, as opposed to 25.8 per cent of males (with the field of engineering the major factor in this difference). The fields occupying ranks six to ten (which include female dominated education and paramedical studies) account for 42.1 per cent of females and 22.9 per cent of males.

While this initial analysis helps to explain part of the overall earnings difference seen here, there are many factors that interact to produce observed differences in median 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. A deeper analysis of the differences between starting salaries for males and females was undertaken for the report *Graduate Salaries 2009*.

When males and females have studied in the same field, differing ... factors such as occupation, type and location of employer, or the hours worked, can also have an effect on earnings ...

## 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 2011 (93.7 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 who had sought and found employment, almost one-quarter (26.4 per cent) first found out about their current full-time 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 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 found out about their full-time jobs, *Table 5* suggests employment seekers need to cast their nets widely, as these results clearly indicate that there are many effective ways to find a full-time position.

Of the 12 job search methods identified in *Table 5*, just over half of the graduates in full-time employment learned of their current employment first through one of three strategies: searching advertisements on the internet (26.4 per cent), talking to family or friends (14.5 per cent) and visiting university or college careers services (10.3 per cent).

... job seekers need to cast their nets widely, as ... [the] results clearly indicate that there are many effective ways to find a full-time job.

**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, 2011 (%)

	Total Cases	%
Advertisement on the internet	5,395	26.4
Family or friends	2,964	14.5
University or college careers service	2,097	10.3
Approached employer directly	1,951	9.5
Other	1,434	7.0
Work contacts or networks	1,228	6.0
Approached by an employer	1,196	5.8
Careers fair or information session	1,192	5.8
Other university or college source (such as faculties or lecturers)	1,034	5.1
Advertisement in a newspaper or other print media	916	4.5
Employment agency	753	3.7
Via résumé posted on the internet	289	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,449</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Like more information?

Further details about graduate destinations, graduate salaries and the CEQ can be found in the forthcoming reports *Graduate Destinations 2011*, *Graduate Salaries 2011*, *Postgraduate Destinations 2011*, *Graduate Course Experience 2011* and *Postgraduate Research Experience 2011*, which will be released progressively during 2012. Previous copies are now available for free download from our website at [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://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; the Beyond Graduation Survey (BGS), a follow-up to the AGS three and five years after course completion; and the Graduate Outlook Survey (GOS), a study of the recruitment experiences and plans of graduate employers in Australia and New Zealand.

More detailed information on graduate outcomes can be found at [www.graduatecareers.com.au/research](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/research)

You can also visit our online database or contact us

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know your worth

[www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au)

check out the *Grad Jobs & Dollars* page for all you need to know about salaries, employment and further study for Australian graduates



15,384  
lattes

number of caffè lattes that can be purchased with the median starting salary<sup>1</sup> for all bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25yrs.

how many can you buy?<sup>2</sup>



agricultural science - \$45,600



education - \$55,000



law - \$51,000



optometry - \$70,000



social work - \$50,000