

# GradStats

DECEMBER 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 2012 AGS, new graduates who completed the requirements for awards in the calendar year 2011 were surveyed regarding their major activities, including labour market activity, further full-time study, 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, 60.7 per cent of the almost 174,000 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 2012 figures for bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment (see *Table 1a*).

- 76.1 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (essentially unchanged from 76.3 per cent in 2011, and down from 79.2 per cent in 2009 and 85.2 per cent in 2008).
- 15.3 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (no notable change from 14.9 per cent in 2011 and notably up from 9.6 per cent in 2008).
- 8.6 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey (a change of no note from 8.7 per cent in 2011 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 post-graduation 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 remain cautious in their hiring plans.
- Of those still seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey (23.9 per cent of those available for full-time employment), around two in every three (the 15.3 per cent of those available for full-time employment discussed above) had found part-time employment while the remainder (8.6 per cent) were without any work (see *Table 1a*).

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## Survey highlights

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- One-fifth of respondents (20.8 per cent – up from 19.4 per cent in 2011), 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 \$52,000 in 2012 from \$50,000 in 2011. This was 77.8 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings (\$66,800 at the time of the AGS<sup>1</sup>), down from 78.1 per cent in 2011 (see *Figure 2*).
- Males started full-time work on a median salary of \$55,000 (up from \$52,000 in 2011) while females in full-time employment earned \$50,000 (no change from \$50,000 in 2011, see *Table 3*).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 94.1 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 (26.2 per cent), talking to family or friends (14.8 per cent) and visiting university or college careers services (11.2 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 \$55,000 ... while females in full-time employment earned \$50,000 ...

Graduates with a combined or double degree had better employment figures (80.0 per cent in full-time employment) than those with a single degree (75.6 per cent).

## Employment outcomes and further study

The results of the 2012 AGS show that, of all domestic bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment, 76.1 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, with a further 15.3 per cent working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment. An additional 8.6 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment four months after completing their qualifications (see *Table 1a*).

These figures indicate that the labour market prospects of new bachelor degree graduates did not change notably between 2011 and 2012, with figures remaining flat in the years following the global economic downturn.

Within an economic climate that continues to reflect concerns regarding problems in Europe, the proportion of graduates available for full-time employment fell between 2010 and 2012, from 64.7 per cent to 62.9 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 related to the same economic uncertainty, the proportion of graduates continuing in further full-time study rose from 19.0 per cent in 2010 to 20.8 per cent in 2012 (see *Table 1*). 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 2012, 11.3 per cent of respondents were either in part-time employment or seeking part-time work and not seeking full-time employment (10.6 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, there was no notable difference in the percentage of males (76.0 per cent — see Table 1a) and females (76.1 per cent) who had found a full-time position by the time of the survey.

Females were less likely than males (7.6 per cent compared with 10.3 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 (16.3 per cent compared with 13.9 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 (21.5 per cent) were more likely than females (20.4 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2012 after completing their course in the previous year (see Table 1).

Table 1a indicates that 15.1 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position early (before 1 May 2011) 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.

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 (82.7 per cent)

than those who had studied mainly full-time (74.8 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 notably better full-time employment figures than those who studied internally. Positive employment 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 over the years. The figures in Table 1b indicate that graduates from a non-English speaking background (67.4 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 (69.3 per cent).

Graduates with a combined or double degree had better employment figures (80.0 per cent in full-time employment)

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

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**Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2010–12 (%)**

	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>							
2010	<sup>^</sup> 67.1	<sup>^</sup> 19.8	<sup>^</sup> 7.3	<sup>^</sup> 0.4	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
2012	<sup>^~</sup> 66.0	<sup>^~</sup> 21.5	<sup>^</sup> 7.5	<sup>^</sup> 0.6	<sup>^</sup> 4.5	100	25,875
<b>Females</b>							
2010	<sup>^</sup> 63.3	<sup>^</sup> 18.6	<sup>^</sup> 11.8	<sup>^</sup> 0.7	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
2012	<sup>^~</sup> 60.9	<sup>^~</sup> 20.4	<sup>^~</sup> 12.5	<sup>^</sup> 0.9	<sup>^</sup> 5.2	100	41,738
<b>Persons*</b>							
2010	64.7	19.0	10.1	0.6	5.6	100	65,045
2011	64.8	19.4	10.0	~ 0.7	~ 5.2	100	68,205
2012	~ 62.9	~ 20.8	~ 10.6	0.7	5.0	100	67,626

\* 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.

~ 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, 2010–12 (%)**

	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**
<b>Males</b>							
2010	<sup>^</sup> 75.4	<sup>^</sup> 10.6	<sup>^</sup> 13.9	<sup>^</sup> 24.6	100	16,399	20.0
2011	<sup>^</sup> 75.8	<sup>^</sup> 10.4	<sup>^</sup> 13.8	<sup>^</sup> 24.2	100	17,671	17.5
2012	76.0	<sup>^</sup> 10.3	<sup>^</sup> 13.9	24.0	100	17,082	18.8
<b>Females</b>							
2010	<sup>^</sup> 76.8	<sup>^</sup> 7.3	<sup>^</sup> 15.9	<sup>^</sup> 23.2	100	25,646	13.0
2011	<sup>^</sup> 76.7	<sup>^</sup> 7.6	<sup>^</sup> 15.7	<sup>^</sup> 23.3	100	26,459	11.9
2012	76.1	<sup>^</sup> 7.6	<sup>^</sup> 16.3	23.9	100	25,436	12.7
<b>Persons*</b>							
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
2012	76.1	8.6	15.3	23.9	100	42,523	15.1

\* 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.

\*\* Percentages based on the group of bachelor degree graduates in full-time employment.

<sup>^</sup> 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, 2012 (%)**

	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>	76.1	8.6	15.3	23.9	100	42,523
Aged less than 25	74.1	8.6	17.3	25.9	100	27,578
Graduates with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background	80.5	8.7	10.8	19.5	100	333
Graduates from a non-English speaking background	67.4	15.9	16.7	32.6	100	6,419
Graduates with a disability	69.3	14.7	15.9	30.7	100	1,318
Studied mainly full-time*	74.8	16.2	16.2	25.2	100	35,641
Studied mainly part-time*	82.7	10.9	10.9	17.3	100	6,817
Studied mainly internally (on-campus) <sup>^</sup>	74.9	9.0	16.1	25.1	100	35,024
Studied mainly externally (distance) <sup>^</sup>	86.6	4.8	8.5	13.4	100	3,424
Mixed mode (internal and distance)	76.9	8.4	14.8	23.1	100	4,031
Double/combined degree <sup>~</sup>	80.0	7.2	12.8	20.0	100	4,489
Single degree <sup>~</sup>	75.6	8.8	15.6	24.4	100	38,010
Regional resident <sup>#</sup>	78.4	7.4	14.2	21.6	100	10,240
Capital city resident <sup>#</sup>	75.1	9.0	15.9	24.9	100	30,984

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

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

than those with a single degree (75.6 per cent). Respondents living in regional areas were also more likely to be in full-time employment than their counterparts in a capital city (78.4 per cent compared with 75.1 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 98.1 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 (also 98.1 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 (93.9 per cent), surveying (93.0 per cent), nursing – initial training (92.2 per cent) and civil engineering (90.5 per cent). Respondents in visual\performing arts, education - post\other, life sciences, social sciences, psychology,

chemistry, architecture, humanities, languages and mathematics 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.

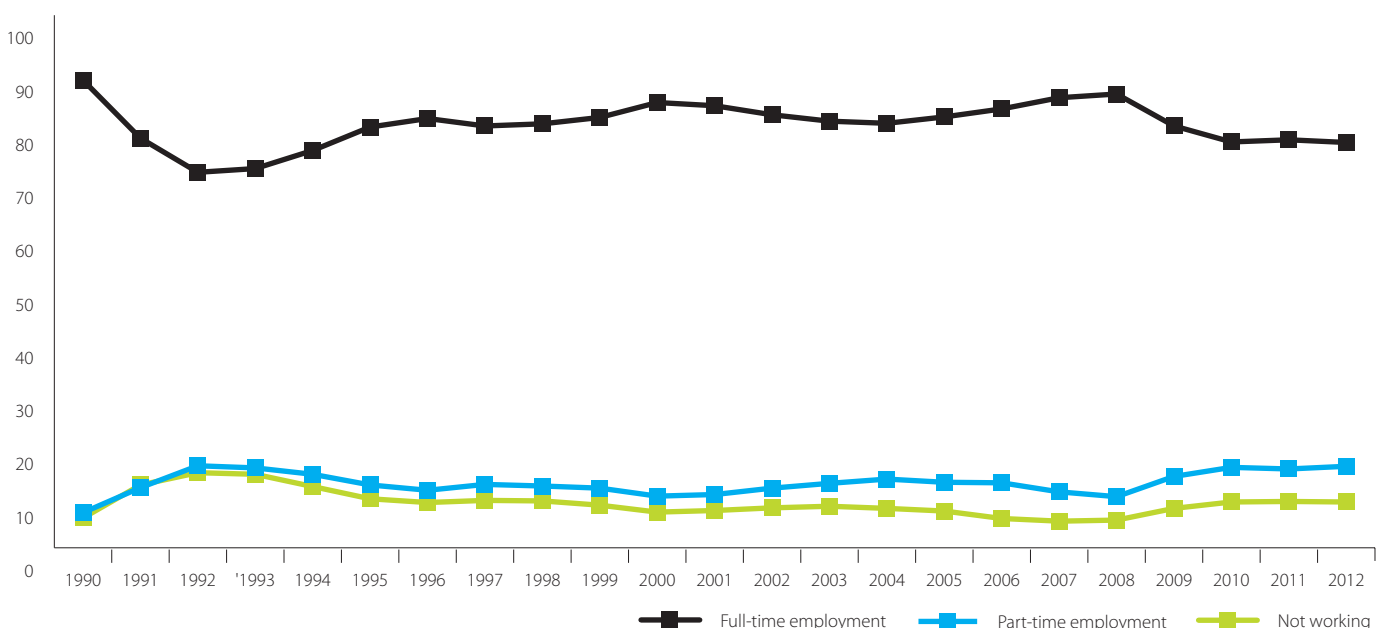
Additionally, not all employment reported by graduates will necessarily be in the area in which the graduate trained. Employment opportunities in the occupations for which some graduates have trained can be limited and it might be the case that some prefer to work on a part-time basis or not at all while seeking relevant employment.

Table 2 also indicates that, overall, 15.1 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. 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, and can help to illustrate the differences across fields in terms of the time taken to find a full-time position.

For example, some fields with very small proportions of graduates in their full-time

position in their final year of study had very high employment figures at the time of the survey, indicating that they had been absorbed into the labour market very quickly. Conversely, other fields had high proportions in their full-time position in their final year of study but had relatively low employment figures. This further illustrates the point that graduates in different fields can face differing labour markets in terms of supply and demand, and different methods of recruitment, and these differences can be reflected in the AGS figures.

Looking at the wider population, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures for May 2012 show that, in the general labour force (aged 15-64), 2.7 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were unemployed (down from 3.0 per cent in 2011). The comparative figure for those with a postgraduate degree was 3.5 per cent, and for those with a graduate or postgraduate diploma it was 2.5 per cent. For the total population (with or without non-school qualifications), the unemployment rate was 5.3 per cent and 7.7 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 very 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 (1990–2012).

**Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of education, 2012 (%)**

	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	72.6	10.9	16.5	27.4	100	559	18.2
Architecture	63.9	15.3	20.8	36.1	100	404	11.2
Building	83.1	5.4	11.5	16.9	100	593	32.7
Urban\Regional Planning	74.8	10.0	15.2	25.2	100	210	20.4
Humanities	65.3	11.6	23.0	34.7	100	4,020	18.2
Languages	65.5	13.0	21.5	34.5	100	478	15.0
Visual\Performing Arts	53.9	15.4	30.7	46.1	100	1,406	11.5
Social Sciences	61.9	16.0	22.1	38.1	100	349	19.0
Psychology	63.1	12.5	24.5	36.9	100	1,235	18.7
Social Work	75.3	10.2	14.5	24.7	100	891	17.0
Business Studies	74.5	9.2	16.2	25.5	100	7,076	21.6
Accounting	79.9	9.6	10.5	20.1	100	2,814	26.8
Economics	76.8	9.4	13.8	23.2	100	500	13.5
Education - Initial	74.9	4.5	20.7	25.1	100	4,305	10.6
Education - Post\Other	58.8	11.8	29.4	41.2	100	17	50.0
Aeronautical Engineering	81.4	8.1	10.6	18.6	100	161	18.3
Chemical Engineering	77.5	11.5	11.1	22.5	100	262	4.4
Civil Engineering	90.5	5.4	4.1	9.5	100	947	12.0
Electrical Engineering	88.0	7.4	4.6	12.0	100	349	15.0
Electronic/Computer Engineering	79.5	10.5	10.0	20.5	100	239	25.3
Mechanical Engineering	88.4	7.3	4.4	11.6	100	593	15.3
Mining Engineering	93.9	5.1	1.0	6.1	100	99	6.5
Other Engineering	85.4	7.9	6.7	14.6	100	671	13.3
Surveying	93.0	7.0	0.0	7.0	100	100	30.1
Dentistry	83.6	2.5	13.8	16.4	100	159	0.8
Health Other	73.3	9.1	17.6	26.7	100	1,886	14.8
Nursing (Initial)	92.2	2.0	5.9	7.8	100	2,969	4.5
Nursing (Post-Initial)	86.1	3.9	10.0	13.9	100	281	5.4
Pharmacy	98.1	1.6	0.2	1.9	100	428	1.0
Medicine	98.1	0.9	1.0	1.9	100	1,395	0.6
Rehabilitation	87.0	4.4	8.5	13.0	100	1,171	0.5
Law	83.0	6.9	10.1	17.0	100	1,266	21.9
Law Other	69.9	12.2	17.9	30.1	100	385	33.5
Computer Science	74.7	13.9	11.4	25.3	100	1,317	22.1
Life Sciences	60.5	14.0	25.5	39.5	100	1,997	12.5
Mathematics	66.0	17.2	16.7	34.0	100	209	12.3
Chemistry	63.2	16.0	20.9	36.8	100	163	18.4
Physical Sciences	74.6	11.0	14.5	25.4	100	173	23.3
Geology	83.7	5.6	10.7	16.3	100	233	6.7
Veterinary Science	80.8	9.4	9.9	19.2	100	213	0.0
<b>Total %</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>23.9</b>			<b>15.1</b>
<b>Total N</b>	<b>32,339</b>	<b>3,668</b>	<b>6,516</b>	<b>10,184</b>		<b>42,523</b>	<b>4,897</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 2012 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 \$52,000 (up from \$50,000 in 2011). This was 77.8 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (MAWE \$66,800) 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 2012, new male graduates earned a median salary of \$55,000, which was 82.3 per cent of MAWE, up from 81.3 per cent in 2011 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 (unchanged from 2011) which was 74.8 per cent of 2012 MAWE (78.1 per cent in 2011). 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 2011.

In dollar terms, the 2012 median starting salary for all graduates rose by \$2,000 (or 4.0 per cent) from \$50,000 while the MAWE figure rose from \$64,000 to \$66,800 (or by 4.4 per cent) over the same period. The median salary for males rose by \$3,000 from \$52,000 (5.8 per cent) over the same period, while for females it was unchanged at \$50,000<sup>2</sup>. In 2012, females' salaries were 90.9 per cent of males' salaries.

At \$80,000, the median starting salary for dentistry graduates (unchanged from 2011) remained the highest for this cohort of graduates (see Tables 3 and 4). In a ranking based on starting salaries, they were followed by graduates from optometry (\$79,000, up from \$70,000 in 2011), earth sciences (\$73,000, up from \$65,000), engineering (\$63,000, up from \$60,000 in 2011), and medicine (\$60,000, up from \$58,500).

Graduates in a number of fields must meet additional training requirements in order to gain professional registration, and this period can sometimes result in relatively low starting salaries. As an example, pharmacy graduates (pre-registration) earned low starting salaries (\$39,000) 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 40 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 2011 and 2012 was for optometry graduates who enjoyed an increase of \$9,000 or 12.9 per cent (from \$70,000 to \$79,000) after experiencing no increase between 2010 and 2011.

Other notable increases in 2012 were seen in the fields of earth sciences (up \$8,000 from \$65,000) and physical sciences (up \$5,000 from \$50,000). In 2012, the fields of art and design, dentistry, social work and veterinary science experienced no increase from 2011.

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 2012, the top earning fields (dentistry, optometry, earth sciences, engineering and medicine) have essentially remained unchanged since 2008 (see Table 4).

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1 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

2 See *GradStats 2011* for relevant 2011 salaries figures.

3 The *2011 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, 2012 (\$,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	55.2 15	49.0 12	* *	52.9 42	48.0 555	49.2 316	* *	* *	* *	49.0 942	50.0 430	48.0 512
Agricultural Science	* *	52.5 16		56.0 29	54.0 12	50.0 93	* *	* *	* *	50.0 146	50.5 49	50.0 97
Architecture & Building	* *	54.9 15		55.5 50	38.0 104	50.0 219	* *	* *	* *	48.0 379	52.0 222	43.0 157
Art & Design	* *	* *	* *	50.5 10	55.0 13	38.0 169	50.0 27	* *	50.0 34	40.0 243	42.5 62	40.0 181
Biological Sciences	* *	51.5 12	52.0 41	52.0 67	50.0 47	46.2 250	54.0 40	56.0 41	55.0 81	50.0 485	49.5 166	50.0 319
Computer Science	60.0 21	59.0 11	* *	59.0 43	55.0 29	50.0 299	50.5 14	* *	53.0 22	52.5 405	52.0 356	55.0 49
Dentistry	* *	* *	70.0 23	75.0 27	96.8 32	* *				80.0 65	92.0 21	77.6 44
Earth Sciences	* *	* *		51.0 14	* *	80.0 99	* *		* *	73.0 125	68.5 72	75.0 53
Economics, Business	53.3 78	52.9 35	49.3 12	52.9 184	51.0 347	46.0 1,682	49.7 24	50.0 27	50.0 51	48.0 2,404	50.0 1,042	47.0 1,362
Education	* *	56.0 11	* *	56.0 15	* *	43.0 55	56.0 998	* *	56.0 1,001	56.0 1,110	56.0 171	56.0 939
Engineering	60.0 59	58.0 26	* *	60.0 118	62.0 436	65.0 832	* *	* *	55.0 11	63.0 1,428	63.0 1,159	64.0 269
Humanities	54.0 87	52.5 40	50.0 11	53.0 192	51.5 132	40.0 616	54.0 61	55.7 24	55.0 85	45.0 1,141	45.0 274	45.0 867
Law	55.0 30	45.0 17		53.0 82	54.0 218	53.0 81	* *	* *	* *	53.0 390	55.0 135	50.7 255
Mathematics	58.0 10	* *	* *	58.0 12	* *	56.5 42	57.6 14	* *	57.0 15	57.0 78	58.1 50	56.0 28
Medicine	* *	* *	60.0 310	60.0 313	* *	* *	* *	* *	* *	60.0 338	60.0 131	60.0 207
Optometry			* *	* *	80.0 28	76.9 11				79.0 42	82.0 15	75.0 27
Paramedical Studies	* *	58.0 13	52.0 1,169	52.0 1,198	53.0 255	50.0 401	55.0 35	54.5 14	55.0 49	52.0 2,053	53.0 306	52.0 1,747
Pharmacy (pre-reg)			50.0 69	50.0 69		36.0 186				39.0 261	36.0 81	39.7 180
Physical Sciences	44.0 18	* *	* *	45.5 24	* *	57.0 70	* *	* *	* *	55.0 114	55.0 69	56.0 45
Psychology	55.5 15	* *	44.5 10	52.0 50	43.0 28	45.0 124	45.0 13	51.0 14	50.0 27	49.0 283	49.5 36	49.0 247
Social Sciences	* *	* *	* *	51.0 29	* *	42.0 49	* *	* *	* *	47.0 110	45.0 35	47.0 75
Social Work	* *	* *	54.9 13	52.5 30		49.0 13	* *			50.0 131	50.9 14	50.0 117
Veterinary Science					45.0 77	* *				45.0 86	46.0 15	45.0 71
All Fields	55.0 367	54.0 236	53.0 1,675	53.0 2,600	52.0 2,351	49.6 5,626	56.0 1,261	55.0 163	56.0 1,424	52.0 12,759	55.0 4,911	50.0 7,848
Males	56.0 193	56.9 86	57.0 302	56.0 694	55.0 1,101	52.0 2,647	56.0 225	54.0 53	56.0 278	55.0 4,911		
Females	55.0 174	52.0 150	52.0 1,373	52.0 1,906	50.0 1,250	45.0 2,979	56.0 1,036	55.0 110	56.0 1,146	50.0 7,848		

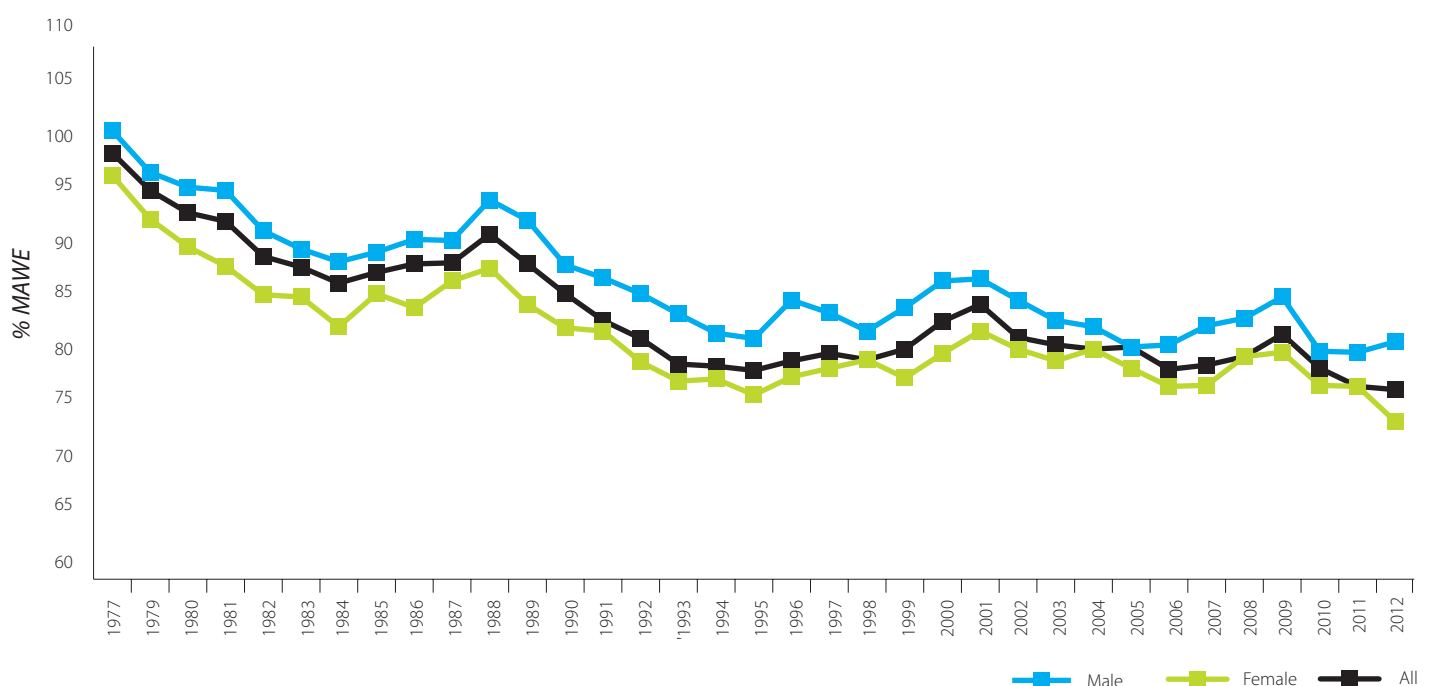
\* Salaries based on fewer than 10 cases not shown. 'Total Government', 'Total Education' and 'Total' columns include cases not shown in related constituent columns. Blank cells indicate there were no responses.



**Table 4:** Fields of education ranked according to level of starting salary, 2008–12

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Dentistry	1	1	1	1	1
Optometry	2	2	2	2	2
Earth Sciences	=4	=4	5	3	3
Engineering	3	3	3	4	4
Medicine	=4	=4	4	5	5
Education	=7	7	6	=6	6
Mathematics	6	6	7	=6	7
Computer Science	10	9	=8	=8	8
Law	=7	8	11	=8	9
Paramedical Studies	=11	11	=8	=10	10
Physical Sciences	=7	10	=8	=10	11
Social work	=11	=12	13	=10	=12
Psychology	15	=12	12	13	=12
Accounting	=13	=12	=14	=14	=12
Biological Sciences	=13	=12	=14	=14	=15
Economics, Business	18	=12	=14	=14	=15
Architecture & Building	16	=12	=14	17	=17
Agricultural Science	17	=12	=14	18	=17
Veterinary Science	=20	=12	=14	19	19
Humanities	=20	=20	21	20	=20
Social Sciences	19	=20	20	21	=20
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, 1997-2012

## Graduating starting salaries

{continued}

Females earned notably higher starting salaries than males in the field of earth sciences (\$6,500 more) and slightly more in a handful of other fields, including pharmacy (\$3,700) and computer science (\$3,000 more). However, this is outweighed by males' greater earnings in many other fields including, most notably, dentistry (\$14,400 more than females), architecture and building (\$9,000 more), optometry (\$7,000 more) and law (\$4,300 more).

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 7.6 per cent of female respondents are within these fields, as opposed to 28.5 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 38.7 per cent of females and 21.1 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* (available for download from [www.graduatecareers.com.au/research](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/research)).

Females earned notably higher starting salaries than males in the field of earth sciences (\$6,500 more) ..., including pharmacy (\$3,700) and computer science (\$3,000 more). However, this is outweighed by males' greater earnings in many other fields ...

## 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 2012 (94.1 per cent, up from 93.7 per cent in 2011), 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 (26.2 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 around 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 (26.2 per cent), talking to family or friends (14.8 per cent) and visiting university or college careers services (11.2 per cent).

Of those graduates who sought and found employment, almost one-quarter (26.2 per cent) first found out about their current full-time job via an advertisement on the internet.

**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, 2012 (%)

	Total Cases	%
Advertisement on the internet	5,282	26.2
Family or friends	2,986	14.8
University or college careers service	2,260	11.2
Approached employer directly	1,881	9.3
Other	1,432	7.1
Work contacts or networks	1,253	6.2
Approached by an employer	1,165	5.8
Careers fair or information session	1,154	5.7
Other university or college source (such as faculties or lecturers)	1,018	5.1
Advertisement in a newspaper or other print media	731	3.6
Employment agency	707	3.5
Via résumé posted on the internet	280	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,149</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 2012*, *Graduate Salaries 2012*, *Postgraduate Destinations 2012*, *Graduate Course Experience 2012* and *Postgraduate Research Experience 2012*, which will be released progressively during 2013. 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

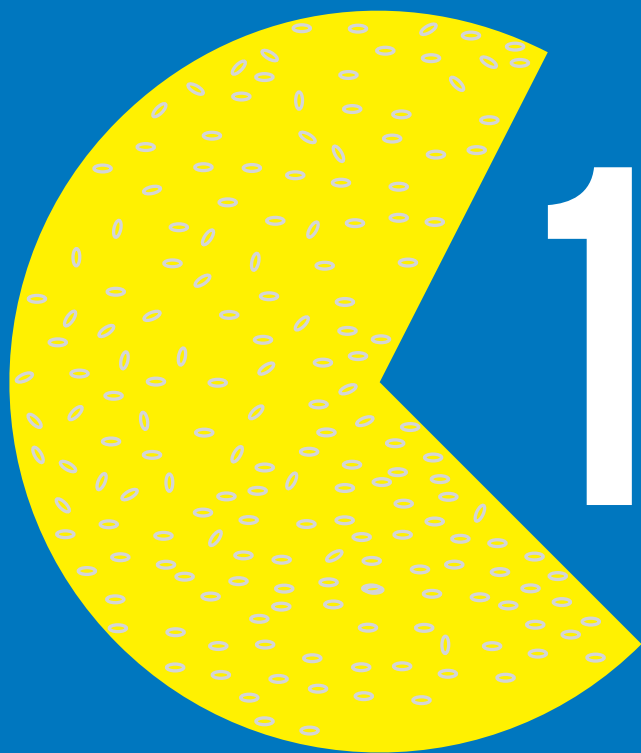
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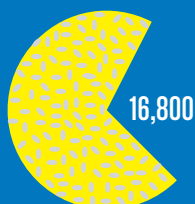
check out the *Grad Jobs & Dollars* page for all you need to know about salaries, employment and further study for Australian graduates



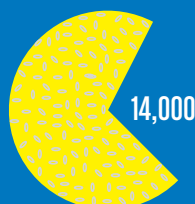
12,000  
burgers

number of burgers 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.

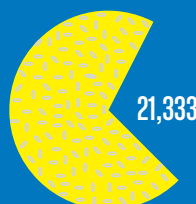
how many can **you** buy?<sup>2</sup>



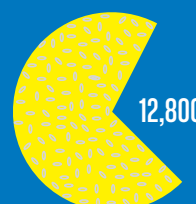
engineering - \$63,000



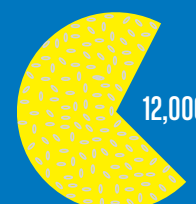
computer sciences - \$52,500



dentistry - \$80,000



economic/business - \$48,000



humanities - \$45,000