

the grad files

December 2000

Graduate Careers Council of Australia

UNI GRADUATES: WORK, SALARIES, STUDY AND COURSE SATISFACTION

The Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) conducts an annual survey which looks at what graduates are doing shortly after the completion of their qualification.

The Graduate Destination Survey looks at how many graduates are in work or are looking for work, what they are earning, and whether or not they are doing another qualification. The survey also gathers information as to how satisfied graduates were with particular aspects of their course.

This publication provides information about recently qualified bachelor degree graduates to students who are considering university, their parents, and the secondary school community. A bachelor degree is an entry-level university qualification and hence, is usually the first qualification a post secondary student acquires.

*The word 'median' is used in this publication and is defined as the middle value in a frequency distribution, below and above which lie values with equal total frequencies. It is similar to, but not the same as, an average.

2000 GRADUATES AT A GLANCE:

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2000, 83.6 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees in 1999.
- A further 9.7 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment.
- A smaller group, 6.7 per cent were not working and were still looking for employment.
- The figures from the points above represent a big improvement on the results of the 1999 survey.
- Over 24 per cent of respondents were undertaking further full-time study after completing their bachelor degree.
- Graduate employment is now at its highest level since 1990.
- The median* annual starting salary (i.e. a graduate's first salary after graduating and obtaining a full-time job) was \$33,000.
- Overall satisfaction with university courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level compared with previous years, with the broad satisfaction figure again coming in at 89 per cent.

EMPLOYMENT

The following section gives an overview of what has been happening to graduate employment.

TABLE 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 1998-2000 (%).

	Available for full-time employment (see Table 1a)	In full-time study	In part-time or casual employment, but not seeking full-time employment	Not working, seeking part-time or casual employment only	Unavailable for full-time study or full-time employment
ALL MALES					
1998	71.5	22.6	3.3	0.4	2.2
1999	68.1	24.8	3.3	0.5	3.4
2000	68.0	25.2	3.1	0.3	3.3
ALL FEMALES					
1998	64.4	21.7	9.0	1.0	3.8
1999	63.2	23.0	8.6	0.9	4.3
2000	63.8	23.6	7.7	0.8	4.2
ALL					
1998	67.1	22.0	6.8	0.8	3.2
1999	65.1	23.7	6.6	0.7	3.9
2000	65.4	24.2	5.9	0.6	3.9

TABLE 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 1998-2000 (%).

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment
ALL MALES				
1998	80.8	9.9	9.3	19.2
1999	82.0	9.0	9.0	18.0
2000	84.5	7.6	7.9	15.5
ALL FEMALES				
1998	78.7	8.1	13.2	21.3
1999	80.0	7.3	12.7	20.0
2000	83.0	6.1	10.9	17.0
ALL				
1998	79.6	8.8	11.6	20.4
1999	80.8	8.0	11.2	19.2
2000	83.6	6.7	9.7	16.4

For people leaving secondary school this year, and embarking on a degree next year, it will be around three or four years (the average time it takes to complete a degree) before they will be looking for full-time employment. While current graduate employment levels aren't immediately relevant to anyone finishing school now, they are certainly relevant to anyone about to finish university.

However, it's a good idea for all university students to keep an eye on graduate employment levels as they pursue their studies to enable them to make informed course and subject choices.

It is worth remembering that graduates are less likely to be unemployed (for any length of time) than are non-graduates.

As the tables on page 2 indicate, currently, of bachelor degree graduates who look for full-time work when they finish their degrees, more than eight in every ten have found it within four months (when the survey is completed). Of the remaining graduates, the statistics show that about half were in part-time work while looking for full-time work, and the other half was not working.

Research suggests that these two (out of ten) find full-time work quite quickly, and that in the long term, unemployment is not a great concern for university graduates.

Another statistic worth noting is that while females were slightly more likely than males to have been seeking full-time employment (17 per cent compared with 15.5 per cent), they were more likely to have some employment (either part-time or casual) while seeking full-time work.

SALARIES

The median annual starting salary for new bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time position was \$33,000. This compares favourably with average earnings in the community which are \$39,200. Overall, starting salaries for male graduates are higher than those for female graduates.

FURTHER STUDY

Postgraduate study means doing another qualification after an initial degree. Further study can mean a postgraduate qualification or it can mean another qualification but not at postgraduate level, for example, an honours year at the end of, but within, a bachelor degree. Postgraduate qualifications include awards like a graduate diploma, masters degree or a doctorate, which is also known as a PhD. Further study is usually undertaken to improve work

prospects, to gain a particular type or level of skill, or to gain entry into professional employment.

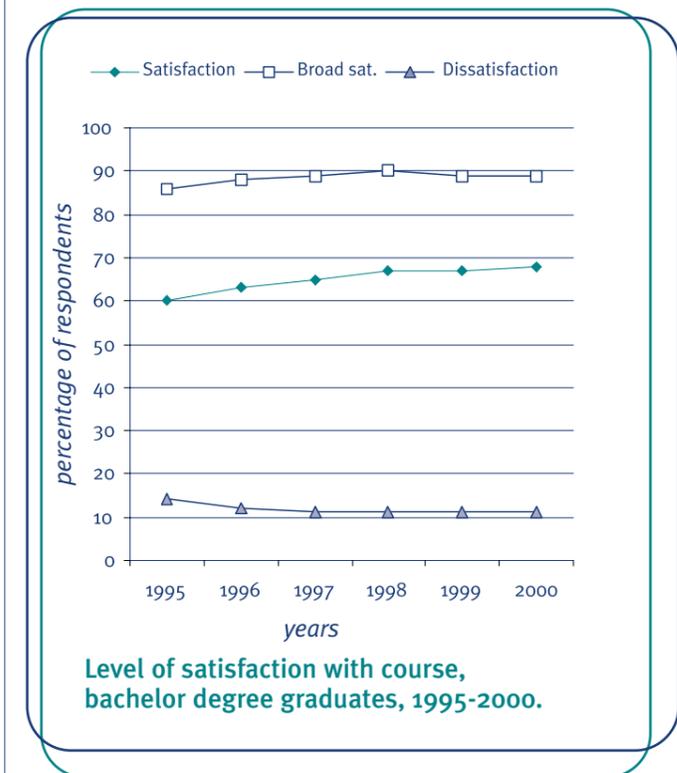
In 2000, almost a quarter of new graduates continued full-time study after their first degree, and there was a slight increase on the previous year. This increase was consistent with the longer-term trend towards more graduates undertaking postgraduate study.

Males were slightly more likely than females (25.2 per cent compared with 23.6 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2000.

GRADUATE SATISFACTION

As said at the beginning, the Course Experience Questionnaire measures bachelor degree graduates' overall satisfaction with their courses.

The graph below shows that dissatisfaction has been falling over the period 1995-2000.



FIELDS OF STUDY

Table 2 sets out some GDS figures for various fields of study. A field of study is defined as a discipline, or an area of knowledge and information. For example, mathematics, law and education are all individual 'fields of study'. The information on fields of study is usually of great interest to people considering university as they can get a feel for the employment outcomes of the fields that interest them.

It's important to obtain information regarding tertiary education from areas other than these statistics, as these figures provide a snapshot of a tertiary education but not the whole picture. For example, the reason

medical graduates have high employment levels is that they must serve an internship in a public hospital before they qualify for full professional registration, and therefore automatically have jobs to go to. The reason that law, architecture, and pharmacy graduates have relatively low starting salaries is because they must also complete further training requirements in their first job before they qualify for full professional registration. These facts are not, and cannot be, represented in the figures.

Secondary school students should discuss post secondary education issues with their teachers, careers advisers, parents, peers, and older students, and should also attend university course information days.

OCCUPATIONS

The section commencing on page 7 lists the types of full-time work graduates from the various fields of study were doing at the time of the GDS. The most common occupations, as reported by the new graduates, are listed after the field of study. The occupations are listed in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned by the graduates, i.e. if 'counsellor' is mentioned first, then it was mentioned most often by the respondents, and so on.

Don't be put off by the regular occurrence of the occupation 'clerk'. It often represents a trainee position in a field the graduate is interested in, and which can lead to more advanced positions later.



Table 2: Employment, further study, starting salaries, 2000.

	In full-time employment %	Seeking full-time employment, not working %	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual %	Further full-time study %	Median starting salary
Agriculture	79.1	9.1	11.8	20.0	\$30,000
Architecture	86.4	6.8	6.8	28.2	\$28,000
Building	89.7	5.3	5.0	8.5	\$34,000
Urban & Reg. Planning	85.0	7.5	7.5	11.3	\$34,000
Humanities	76.0	9.6	14.4	37.0	\$30,000
Languages	71.2	12.4	16.5	36.6	\$31,700
Visual/Performing Arts	62.8	13.9	23.4	36.8	\$28,000
Social Sciences	71.6	10.0	18.4	28.7	\$31,000
Psychology	71.9	10.7	17.4	46.1	\$32,400
Social Work	79.3	7.7	13.0	4.9	\$34,000
Business Studies	83.9	6.6	9.4	15.6	\$30,000
Accounting	91.9	5.3	2.8	11.9	\$30,000
Economics	86.1	7.6	6.3	29.8	\$33,200
Education, Initial	82.4	3.8	13.8	11.2	\$35,000
Education, Post-Initial	86.8	2.4	10.8	4.4	\$35,000
Aeronautical Eng.	95.0	2.5	2.5	11.1	\$38,000
Chemical Eng.	88.5	5.1	6.4	18.8	\$38,000
Civil Engineering	92.9	5.4	1.7	7.7	\$35,000
Electrical Eng.	93.9	3.8	2.4	15.8	\$39,100
Electron/Comp Eng.	91.9	5.2	2.9	13.7	\$39,100
Mechanical Eng.	86.0	10.5	3.4	13.9	\$36,000
Mining Engineering	84.9	8.2	6.8	15.7	\$46,500
Other Engineering	83.1	11.4	5.6	18.9	\$36,000
Surveying	97.6	2.4	0.0	12.4	\$32,100
Dentistry	95.9	0.8	3.3	18.8	\$50,000
Health, Other	86.1	5.9	7.9	25.8	\$33,000
Nursing, Initial	95.1	1.3	3.5	6.5	\$30,700
Nursing, Post-initial	94.9	0.7	4.4	3.4	\$31,000
Pharmacy	97.6	1.2	1.2	12.0	\$25,000
Medicine	100.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	\$45,000
Rehabilitation	88.7	3.1	8.2	5.4	\$34,100
Law	92.9	3.5	3.6	27.6	\$32,000
Law, Other	85.6	5.7	8.6	20.8	\$31,000
Computer Science	88.2	7.6	4.2	15.1	\$37,000
Life Sciences	68.0	12.6	19.4	45.6	\$31,000
Mathematics	83.5	8.5	8.1	42.0	\$38,000
Chemistry	73.7	14.0	12.3	52.7	\$32,500
Physics	78.8	11.5	9.6	57.8	\$34,900
Geology	77.6	13.0	9.3	54.6	\$35,000
Veterinary Science	93.6	4.3	2.1	12.6	\$33,000
Total %	83.6	6.7	9.7	24.2	\$33,000
Total respondents	31,056	2,478	3,604	13,729	

Agricultural Science: agricultural or environmental scientist; manager; clerk; manual worker; farmer; scientific officer; business professional

Architecture: architect; building technical officer; designer; clerk; manager

Building: manager; building technical officer; quantity surveyor; designer; clerk; other building or engineering professional; business professional

Urban and Regional Planning: urban and regional planner; clerk; manager; other building or engineering professional

Humanities: clerk; manager; business professional; other professional; teacher; journalist; public relations

Languages: clerk; teacher; business professional; other professional; manager; translator or interpreter

Visual and Performing Arts: designer or illustrator; clerk; teacher; business or other professional; manager; film, radio, TV, and stage; visual or performing artist (other); musician or composer; photographer; actor or dancer

Social Science: clerk; business or other professional; welfare or counselling; manager; science professional; teacher; health professional

Psychology: clerk; welfare or counselling; business professional; manager; psychologist; teacher; other professional; health professional

Social Work: social worker; welfare or counselling; clerk; manager

Business Studies: clerk; manager; business professional; marketing; accounting; computing professional; personnel

Accounting: accountant; clerk; business professional; manager

Economics: business professional; clerk; manager; accounting; economist; other professional

Education (initial teacher training): primary teacher; secondary teacher; pre-primary teacher; other teacher; manager; clerk

Education (post-initial teacher training): primary teacher; secondary teacher; other teacher; manager; pre-primary teacher; business professional

Aeronautical Engineering: manager; engineer; business or other professional

Chemical Engineering: chemical engineer; other engineer; business professional; manager; clerk; mechanical engineer; engineering technical officer

Civil Engineering: civil engineer; other engineer; manager; engineering technical officer; business professional

Electrical Engineering: electrical engineer; computing professional; manager; engineering technical officer; other engineer

Electronic/Computer Engineering: computing professional; electrical engineer; other engineer; engineering technical officer; business professional; manager

Mechanical Engineering: mechanical engineer; other engineer; manager; engineering technical officer; computing professional; clerk

Mining Engineering: mining engineer; other engineer and related

Other Engineering: engineer; manager; engineering technical officer; clerk; computing professional; business professional

Surveying: surveyor; business professional; engineering technical officer; engineering and building professional

Dentistry: dentist

Health Sciences: medical imaging professional; other health professional; clerk; manager; optometrist; nurse; medical or scientific technical officer; podiatrist; science professional; chiropractor/ osteopath; medical records administrator

Nursing: nurse

Pharmacy: pharmacist

Medicine: medical practitioner

Rehabilitation Studies: physiotherapist; occupational therapist; speech pathologist; other health professional

Law: lawyer; legal clerk; accountant; manager; business or other professional; clerk

Law (other): police; legal clerk; clerk; manager; lawyer; business or other professional

Computing: computer professional; business professional; clerk; manager

Biological and Life Sciences: clerk; manager; medical or science officer; environmental or life scientist; business or other professional; health professional; other scientific or engineering; teacher

Mathematics: business professional; actuary; clerk; computing professional; mathematician or statistician; manager; organisational analyst; other science or engineering professional; teacher

Chemistry: medical or scientific technical officer; chemist (not pharmacist); clerk; business professional; other scientific or engineering professional

Physical Science: health professional; clerk; other scientific or engineering professional; computing professional; business professional; manager; medical, scientific or engineering technical officer

Geology and Earth Sciences: geologist or geophysicist; clerk; medical or scientific technical officer; environmental scientist; other scientific or engineering professional; manager

Veterinary Science: veterinarian

THE LAST WORD

Entering a post secondary institution usually requires much thought and research on behalf of the secondary school student. A tertiary education is not something to take lightly but the pay-offs are immense and include a fulfilling career.

Consult careers references at your school, university careers advisers, and investigate student websites, especially www.detya.gov.au, www.dewrsb.gov.au, www.jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook and www.gradlink.edu.au.

MORE INFORMATION:

School principals, teachers, careers advisers, students, and parents can purchase the reports *Graduate Destination Survey 1999*, *Graduate Starting Salaries 1999*, and the *Course Experience Questionnaire 1999* from the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA).

Ph. 03 8344 9333, Fax. 03 9347 7298, Email: gradlink@gcca.unimelb.edu.au, or write to GCCA, PO Box 28, Parkville, VIC, 3052

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

Who Are We?

The Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) is your key resource for information on graduate employment: we are the authority on the supply of and demand for new graduates of

Australian universities. We promote positive career and employment outcomes for graduates, in association with the Higher Education sector, employers and government.

What Does the GCCA Do?

Our role involves:

- Promoting employment and career opportunities for graduates of Australian universities.
- Researching and reporting on graduate employment outcomes.
- Providing quality careers education products and services, including publications, videos and a website, to students and graduates, employers, Australian universities and GCCA members.

Our Products and Services

In addition to the Graduate Opportunities employer directory, we deliver the gradlink range of products and services which include:

Gradlink Publications

Careers Education/Graduate Recruitment

- **Career Information Booklets** – a series of 16 booklets focusing on employment prospects in specific occupations and industries
- **Your Career and You** – a self-assessment and career exploration guide for students and graduates
- **Working the Web** – a career planning guide which focuses on using the Internet as a key resource
- **Guide to Campus Recruiting** – an invaluable pocket book for all graduate recruiters detailing universities' Careers Service contacts, facilities, semester dates and graduating student numbers.

Annual Research Reports

- **Graduate Destination Survey** – the official annual report on graduates' employment status
- **Graduate Starting Salaries** – study of earnings of new graduates in their first full-time employment
- **Postgraduate Destination Survey** – employment outcomes for graduates with postgraduate qualifications

- **Course Experience Questionnaire** – a survey on the attitudes of graduates towards their courses and the skills acquired throughout their tertiary education.

Gradlink Videos

We provide a range of local and overseas videos covering topics such as written applications and interviews, networking, understanding assessment centres, career exploration and employment prospects within specific occupations.

Gradlink Website

(www.gradlink.edu.au)
gradlink is the official graduate employment website of the Australian Higher Education sector and it has been designed to facilitate university students' and graduates' links to employers. It focuses on graduate job opportunities throughout Australia (provided in association with The Good Guides Group and SEEK Campus) and provides career education information. gradlink is promoted by universities throughout the country.

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gradlink Helpdesk

Telephone: +61 3 9349 4300 Facsimile: +61 3 9347 7298

Email: gradlink@gcca.unimelb.edu.au

Web: Visit the GCCA home page at www.gradlink.edu.au