

Uni Graduates:

Work, Salaries, Study and Course Satisfaction

Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) conducts an annual survey of new graduates shortly after the completion of their studies.

The Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) looks at how many graduates are in work or are seeking employment, what they are earning, and whether or not they are studying for 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 for students who are considering university. It will also be helpful for their parents and the secondary school community. A bachelor degree is an initial higher education qualification and is usually the first qualification after secondary school.

Our other Australian Graduate Survey summary, *GradStats*, gives more details.

2007 Graduates at a glance:

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment¹ in 2007;
 - 84.5 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (up from 82.4 per cent last year);
 - 10.5 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment (down from 12.2 per cent last year); and
 - 5.0 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey (5.5 per cent last year).
- These are the strongest employment figures for new graduates since 1990. After figures fell from the previous highest point in 2000 and levelled out between 2003 and 2004, the AGS has shown a continued improvement in employment prospects for new graduates since 2005. For the last four years there has been a drop in the percentage of those not working while seeking full-time employment.
- One-fifth of respondents (20.0 per cent – down from 20.3 per cent last year), were undertaking further full-time study after completing their bachelor qualifications.
- The typical (median²) annual starting salary for new Australian resident bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia was \$43,000 (\$40,800 last year). This was 80.1 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings for all working males in Australia (\$53,700 at the time of the AGS), up from 79.7 per cent in 2006.
- Males started work on a median salary of \$45,000 (up from \$42,000 last year) and females earned \$42,000 (up from \$40,000 last year).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 89.8 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

¹ This group comprises graduates who have not gone on to further full-time study, and who are either in, or are looking for full-time employment.

² The median is the value midway between the highest and lowest values. It is similar to, but not the same as, an average.



Employment

The following section gives an overview of graduate employment over the last few years.

Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 2005-07 (%).

	Available for full-time employment (see Table 1a)	In full-time study	In part-time or casual employment, not seeking full-time employment	Not working, seeking part-time or casual employment only	Unavailable for full-time study or any employment	Total %†	Total cases
Males							
2005	69.8	23.6	3.8	0.4	2.4	100	24,659
2006	68.8	21.2	5.5	0.3	4.3	100	24,904
2007	69.3	21.1	5.1	0.3	4.2	100	24,145
Females							
2005	66.1	21.8	8.0	0.8	3.4	100	41,056
2006	65.0	19.8	10.0	0.6	4.6	100	41,780
2007	65.5	19.3	9.8	0.6	4.8	100	40,876
Persons*							
2005	67.4	22.5	6.4	0.6	3.1	100	65,738
2006	66.4	20.3	8.3	0.5	4.5	100	66,702
2007	66.9	20.0	8.1	0.5	4.5	100	65,110

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

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

Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by sex, 2005-07 (%).

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment	Total %†	Total cases
Males						
2005	81.4	8.2	10.4	18.6	100	17,214
2006	83.0	6.4	10.6	17.0	100	17,119
2007	85.6	5.8	8.6	14.4	100	16,736
Females						
2005	80.5	6.1	13.4	19.5	100	27,121
2006	81.9	4.9	13.2	18.1	100	27,154
2007	83.9	4.6	11.6	16.1	100	26,733
Persons*						
2005	80.9	6.9	12.3	19.1	100	44,347
2006	82.4	5.5	12.2	17.6	100	44,286
2007	84.5	5.0	10.5	15.5	100	43,549

* 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.

For many people leaving secondary school this year, and starting 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 secondary school and higher education students to be aware of graduate employment figures as they pursue their studies so that they can make informed decisions about their course, subject and job search choices.

It's also worth remembering that graduates are less likely to be unemployed (for any length of time) than non-graduates. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that graduates have an unemployment rate half that of non-graduates.

As the tables opposite indicate, of bachelor degree graduates who look for full-time work when they finish their degrees, more than eight in every ten (84.5 per cent – see Table 1a) have found it within four months (when the survey is completed). Of the remaining graduates still looking for full-time work, 10.5 per cent were in part-time work while they were looking and the remainder (5.0 per cent) were not working.

Research suggests that those graduates not in a full-time job at the time of the survey do find full-time work soon after, 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 at the time of the survey (16.1 per cent compared with 14.4 per cent), they were less likely than males (4.6 per cent compared with 5.8 per cent) to have been without any work while seeking full-time employment.

Salaries

In 2007, the median annual starting salary for new Australian resident bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia was \$43,000 (up from \$40,800 last year). This was 80.1 per cent of the annual rate of male average weekly earnings (\$53,700 at the time of the AGS).

Starting salaries for male graduates (\$45,000) were slightly higher than those for female graduates (\$42,000). The overall salary for females was 93.3 per cent of males' earnings. Females earned slightly higher starting salaries than males in computer science (104.7 per cent of males' salaries) and agricultural science (102.5 per cent). Their earnings were roughly the equivalent of their male colleagues' salaries in dentistry, mathematics, biological sciences, education, engineering and veterinary science.

Some of the difference in salaries between males and females is due to different course selection and employment choices that they make (such as type of employer or the hours worked).

Further Full-time Study

Further full-time study means doing another qualification after an initial degree. This can include a postgraduate qualification or it can mean studying for another qualification but not at postgraduate level, for example, an honours year at the end of, but part of, a bachelor degree.

Postgraduate qualifications include awards like graduate or postgraduate certificates or diplomas, a masters degree or a doctorate, which is also known as a PhD (or Doctor of Philosophy). Further study is usually undertaken to improve work prospects, to gain a particular type or level of training or skill, or to gain entry into professional employment.

In 2007, over one in every five new bachelor degree graduates (20.0 per cent – see Table 1) continued in some type of full-time study after their first degree.

Males were slightly more likely than females (21.1 per cent compared with 19.3 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study.



Graduate Satisfaction

The Course Experience Questionnaire measures bachelor degree graduates' overall satisfaction with their courses. The graph below

(Figure 1) shows that satisfaction levels have been consistently high since 1995.

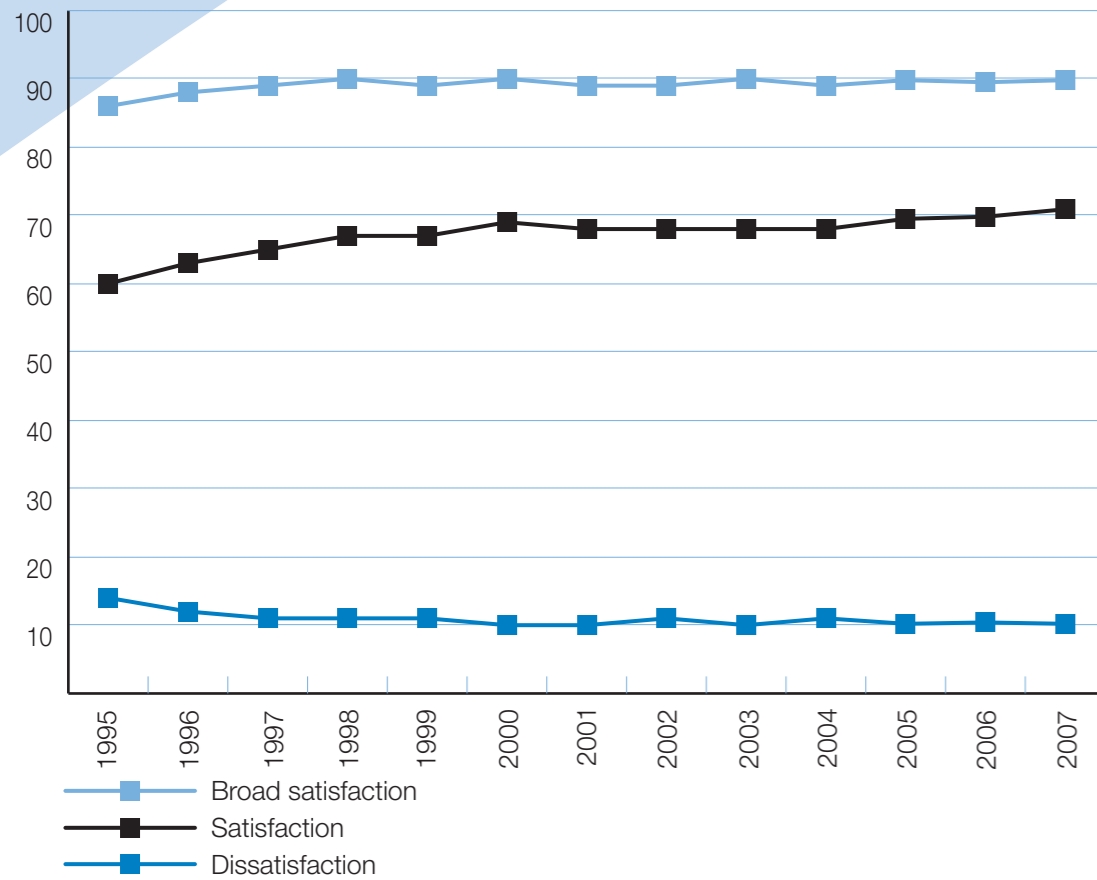


Figure 1: Level of satisfaction with course, bachelor degree graduates, 1995-2007.

Fields of Education

Table 2 sets out some AGS figures for various fields of education. A field of education is defined as a discipline, or an area of knowledge and information. An individual field of education includes courses, specialisations and units of study with the same or similar vocational emphasis. For example, mathematics, law and education (i.e., teacher training) are all individual fields of education.

The information we gather on fields of education is usually of great interest to people considering higher education, as they can get a feel for the employment outcomes in the fields that interest them.

It's important for intending students to obtain information regarding tertiary education from areas other than these statistics, as they provide a snapshot of higher 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 immediately after university.

Architecture and pharmacy graduates can have relatively low starting salaries because they must also complete further training requirements in their first professional job before they qualify for full professional registration. They go on to much higher salaries in subsequent years, but these facts are not represented in the figures from the Australian Graduate Survey.

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

Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, in further full-time study and the median starting salaries of those in full-time employment, by field of education, 2007 (%).

	Available for full-time employment				Further full-time study (%)	* Median starting salary (\$,000)
	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment		
Agriculture	78.5	8.0	13.6	21.5	15.6	40.0
Architecture	94.3	2.5	3.1	5.7	25.4	36.2
Building	91.2	3.0	5.8	8.8	18.5	40.0
Urban\Regional Planning	93.6	2.3	4.1	6.4	9.2	47.4
Humanities	75.1	8.3	16.6	24.9	30.2	37.1
Languages	75.9	8.6	15.5	24.1	37.2	42.2
Visual\Perform. Arts	66.3	10.6	23.1	33.7	32.0	35.0
Social Sciences	73.9	8.2	17.9	26.1	32.8	40.0
Psychology	78.9	5.7	15.4	21.1	41.8	42.0
Social Work	88.2	4.7	7.1	11.8	8.8	44.0
Business Studies	85.1	4.9	9.9	14.9	11.9	40.0
Accounting	86.4	5.4	8.2	13.6	10.1	40.0
Economics	87.5	6.1	6.3	12.5	26.9	45.0
Education - Initial	80.2	3.3	16.5	19.8	6.2	46.0
Education - Post\Other	89.3	3.6	7.1	10.7	30.7	43.0
Aero. Eng	92.1	3.9	3.9	7.9	11.4	49.9
Chemical Eng	86.2	6.2	7.6	13.8	13.3	55.0
Civil Eng	97.8	1.0	1.2	2.2	5.2	50.0
Electrical Eng	89.9	7.2	2.8	10.1	10.0	50.0
Electron/Comp Eng	86.9	7.2	5.9	13.1	11.4	48.0
Mechanical Eng	91.7	5.3	3.0	8.3	6.2	50.0
Mining Eng	98.7	0.0	1.3	1.3	0.0	60.0
Other Eng	91.8	4.0	4.2	8.2	13.8	50.0
Surveying	94.2	0.7	5.0	5.8	5.2	48.0
Dentistry	95.3	0.0	4.7	4.7	3.8	70.0
Health Other	85.0	4.1	10.8	15.0	27.5	43.0
Nursing (Initial)	97.4	0.8	1.8	2.6	4.2	42.0
Nursing (Post-initial)	98.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	42.0
Pharmacy	99.4	0.6	0.0	0.6	10.5	34.0
Medicine	98.2	0.7	1.1	1.8	7.0	50.0
Rehabilitation	93.9	1.9	4.3	6.1	13.5	45.0
Law	91.8	4.3	3.9	8.2	16.1	45.0
Law Other	87.1	3.9	8.9	12.9	15.4	41.0
Computer Science	83.0	7.9	9.1	17.0	12.2	43.2
Life Sciences	72.7	8.5	18.8	27.3	43.4	41.0
Mathematics	80.8	7.5	11.7	19.2	38.1	46.0
Chemistry	83.0	6.0	11.0	17.0	54.7	42.0
Physical Sciences	78.1	11.0	11.0	21.9	51.2	43.0
Geology	86.0	4.8	9.1	14.0	36.5	55.0
Veterinary Science	94.0	2.0	4.0	6.0	9.0	40.0
Total %	84.5	5.0	10.5	15.5	20.0	43.0
Total N	36,805	2,193	4,551	6,744	13,032	

* Based on bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia.



Occupations

The following section lists the types of full-time work graduates from the various fields of education were doing at the time of the

AGS. The most common occupations, as reported by the new graduates, are listed after the field of education. The occupations are listed in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned by the

graduates. So, if 'counsellor' is mentioned first, then it was mentioned most often by the survey respondents, and so on.

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

Agricultural Science: environmental scientists; agricultural & forestry scientists; clerical & administrative worker; manager & administrator; farm, forestry and garden workers; business, information, marketing professional; agricultural, medical & science technicians

Architecture: architects & landscape architects; architectural, building & surveying technicians; clerical & administrative worker; manager & administrator; design & architecture professional; engineering professional; sales worker; urban & regional planners

Building: design & architecture professional; manager & administrator; clerical & administrative worker; engineering professional; architectural, building & surveying technicians; architects & landscape architects; business, information, marketing professional; cartographers & surveyors

Urban and Regional Planning: urban & regional planners; manager & administrator; business, information, marketing professional; engineering professional; clerical & administrative worker; building & engineering technicians

Humanities: clerical & administrative worker; business, information, marketing professional; community & personal service workers; manager & administrator; journalist\writer\author\editor; sales worker; education professional; social professional; public relations

Languages: clerical & administrative worker; education professional; business, information, marketing professional; community & personal service workers; manager & administrator; sales worker; journalist\writer\author\editor

Visual and Performing Arts: graphic & web designers, & illustrators; clerical & administrative worker; education professional; sales worker; manager & administrator; business, information, marketing professional; community & personal service workers; fashion, industrial & jewellery designers; actors, dancers & other entertainers; manual worker; visual arts & crafts professionals; trades; information & communication technology professional; film, television, radio & stage directors; music professionals; photographers

Social Science: clerical & administrative worker; business, information, marketing professional; social & welfare professional; community & personal service workers; manager & administrator; sales worker; education professional

Psychology: clerical & administrative worker; business, information, marketing professional; social & welfare professional; community & personal service workers; manager & administrator; psychologist; sales worker; education professional

Social Work: social worker; community & personal service workers; welfare worker; clerical & administrative worker; counsellor

Business Studies: clerical & administrative worker; manager & administrator; sales, marketing & public relations professionals; accountant, auditor; information & organisation professionals; human resource & training professionals; sales worker; financial brokers & dealers, & investment advisers; community & personal service workers; information & communication technology professional

Accounting: accountant, auditor; clerical & administrative worker; manager & administrator; financial brokers & dealers, & investment advisers; information & organisation professionals

Economics: business, information, marketing professional; clerical & administrative worker; economist; accountant, auditor; manager & administrator; education professional

Education (initial teacher training): primary school teacher; secondary school teacher; pre-primary school teacher; school teacher, other; education professional

Education (post-initial teacher training): primary school teacher; manager & administrator; education professional; secondary school teacher; business, information, marketing professional

Aeronautical Engineering: community & personal service workers (air force); engineering professional; air transport professional; information & communication technology professional

Chemical Engineering: engineering professional; chemical & materials engineers; science professional; business, information, marketing professional

Civil Engineering: civil engineering professionals; engineering professional; manager & administrator; building & engineering technicians

Electrical Engineering: electrical engineers; engineering professional; information & communication technology professionals; community & personal service workers; business, information, marketing professional

Electronic/Computer Engineering: information & communication technology professionals; engineering professional; manager & administrator; business, information, marketing professional; information & communication technology & telecommunications technicians

Mechanical Engineering: industrial, mechanical & production engineers; engineering professional; manager & administrator; building & engineering technicians

Mining Engineering: mining engineers; engineering professional

Other Engineering: other engineering professionals; industrial, mechanical & production engineers; information & communication technology professionals; electrical engineers; science professional; civil engineering professionals; business, information, marketing professional

Surveying: cartographers & surveyors; engineering professional; business, information, marketing professional; building & engineering technicians

Dentistry: dental practitioners

Health Sciences: medical imaging professionals; community & personal service workers; health professional; science professional; clerical & administrative worker; podiatrists; dietitians; business, information, marketing professional; optometrists & orthoptists

Nursing: nurse

Pharmacy: pharmacists

Medicine: medical practitioners; health professional; science professional

Rehabilitation Studies: physiotherapists; occupational therapists; speech professionals & audiologists; health professional; community & personal service workers; social professional

Law: legal professionals; court & legal clerks; business, information, marketing professional; clerical & administrative worker; manager & administrator

Law (other): police; clerical & administrative worker; business, information, marketing professional; manager & administrator; community & personal service workers; legal professionals; court & legal clerks

Computing: information & communication technology professionals; business, information, marketing professional; information & communication technology & telecommunications technicians; manager & administrator; clerical & administrative worker

Biological and Life Sciences: clerical & administrative worker; agricultural, medical & science technicians; community & personal service workers; health professional; life scientists; environmental scientists; manager & administrator; education professional; business, information, marketing professional

Mathematics: education professional; business, information, marketing professional; clerical & administrative worker; information & communication technology professionals; actuaries; mathematicians & statisticians; engineering professional; management & organisation analysts

Chemistry: chemists, & food & wine scientists; agricultural, medical & science technicians; engineering professional; community & personal service workers; manual worker; education professional; clerical & administrative worker; manager & administrator; business, information, marketing professional

Physical Science: business, information, marketing professional; community & personal service workers; science professional; transport professional; engineering professionals & communication technology professionals; manager & administrator

Geology: geologists & geophysicists; environmental scientists; community & personal service workers

Veterinary Science: veterinarians

The Last Word

Entering a university or college usually requires much thought and research on behalf of the secondary school student. The choices you make about your university education shouldn't be taken lightly, but the rewards are immense and include personal growth, a fulfilling career with strong employment prospects and high earnings potential.

Consult careers references at your school, talk to university careers advisers, and investigate student websites, especially www.dest.gov.au, university web sites, and GradsOnline at www.graduatecareers.com.au.

More information:

School principals, teachers, careers advisers, students, and parents can purchase the reports *Graduate Destinations*, *Graduate Salaries*, *Graduate Course Experience* and *Grads, Jobs and Dollars*, currently available from Graduate Careers Australia (GCA).

Phone (03) 9349 4300 Facsimile (03) 9347 7298
Email: surveyhelp@graduatecareers.com.au
or write to GCA, PO Box 28, Parkville, VIC, 3052

For further information on graduate employment, graduate destination statistics, and GCA, visit the *GradsOnline* website at www.graduatecareers.com.au

Information on around 400 occupations is available in Job Outlook on-line at www.jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook.

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Graduate Careers Australia is an organisation that provides quality careers education products to students and graduates. These include a popular website designed to help students look and apply for work, as well as publications and videos covering many aspects of employment and career exploration.

www.graduatecareers.com.au

The Graduate Careers Australia website is an easy-to-use, central source of information about graduate careers, which can help students and graduates to:

- search for a graduate position
- investigate work in different industries
- find vacation work
- write a winning job application and résumé
- get in touch with university careers services
- explore options for further study
- research graduate starting salaries and employment rates (via gradsonline)

Graduate Careers Australia Products

Graduate Careers Australia products include the employer directory *Graduate Opportunities*, the self-assessment guide *Your Career And You*, industry career information booklets, the Graduate Destination Survey Reports and videos such as *Getting The Job* and *Out in Front With an Arts Degree*.

Many Graduate Careers Australia products are available to students free of charge from Careers Services on campus, or by visiting our website at www.graduatecareers.com.au



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