

GradStats

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The Graduate Careers Council of Australia's Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) is a study of the activities of new university graduates around four months after the completion of their qualifications. In the 2001 GDS, new graduates who completed the requirements for their qualifications in the calendar year 2000 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 the destinations of Australian resident bachelor degree graduates (figures for overseas residents are discussed in the full GDS report). Overall, 62.6 per cent of this group responded to the survey.

Graduates in 2001: Work, Study, Salaries and Course Satisfaction — Main Points

- Of bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment in 2001, 83.0% per cent (83.6 per cent in 2000) were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees. A further 10.0 per cent (9.7 per cent last year) were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment.
- An additional 7.0 per cent (6.7 per cent last year) were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey.
- These figures represent a consolidation of employment prospects for new graduates in 2001 after a notable improvement between 1999 and 2000. In 1999, 80.8 per cent were in full-time employment, 11.2 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment, and 8.0 per cent were not working and looking for full-time employment.
- Almost a quarter of respondents (23.4 per cent) were undertaking further full-time study after completing their qualification. Males (24.7 per cent) were more likely than females (22.7 per cent) to have continued in full-time study.
- The median annual starting salary for bachelor degree graduates in their first full-time employment was \$35,000. This was 85.8 per cent of average earnings, up from 84.2 per cent last year and from 81.6 per cent in 1999. The 2001 figure is the highest since 1991
- Males earned a starting salary of \$36,000 (up from \$34,500) and females earned \$34,000 (up from \$32,000).
- Overall satisfaction with courses as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) remains at a high level, with 89 per cent of graduates expressing broad satisfaction with their courses.

The results of the 2001 Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), show that 83.0 per cent of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment were in full-time employment within four months of completing their qualifications (see Table 1a). A further 10.0 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while continuing to seek full-time employment, while only 7.0 per cent were not working and still looking for full-time employment at the time of the survey.

These results represent a consolidation of employment prospects for new bachelor degree graduates after a notable improvement in the 2000 GDS, which saw employment figures rise from 80.8 per cent in 1999 to 83.6 per cent (see Table 1a).

In the last two years, graduate employment has reached its highest levels since 1990. Figure 1 shows how employment levels have recovered in recent years, though employment remains below the levels experienced in the late 1980s.

Generally, between one fifth and one quarter of respondents elect to continue in further full-time study. In 2001, 23.4 per cent did so, down slightly from 24.2 per cent in 2000. In comparison, 23.7 per cent continued their studies in 1999 (see Table 1). These figures

include those proceeding to honours years and higher degrees.

A further 6.0 per cent of respondents were in part-time or casual work and were not seeking full-time employment (5.9 per cent in 2000), while 0.6 per cent were not working and seeking part-time or casual employment only (0.6 per cent in 2000). These figures have remained fairly stable over the last five years.

Of those graduates seeking full-time employment, males (83.2 per cent — see Table 1a) were only a little more likely to have found it by the time of the survey than their female colleagues (82.9 per cent). Previous years have seen a slightly larger difference, in favour of males.

Of particular note is the rise in the percentage of males seeking full-time employment (15.5 per cent in 2000, 16.8 per cent in 2001). Females were slightly more likely than males to have been seeking full-time employment (17.1 per cent as opposed to 16.8 per cent), but were less likely than males (6.1 per cent compared with 8.5 per cent) to have been without any work while seeking full-time employment.

Table 1: Activities of bachelor degree graduates, by sex, 1999-2001 (%).

	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 full-time employment	Total cases	Total %
Males							
1999	68.1	24.8	3.3	0.5	3.4	23,303	100
2000	68.0	25.2	3.1	0.3	3.3	21,794	100
2001	68.8	24.7	3.7	0.3	2.5	22,056	100
Females							
1999	63.2	23.0	8.6	0.9	4.3	36,584	100
2000	63.8	23.6	7.7	0.8	4.2	34,921	100
2001	65.8	22.7	7.5	0.8	3.3	35,732	100
Persons							
1999	65.1	23.7	6.6	0.7	3.9	59,926	100
2000	65.4	24.2	5.9	0.6	3.9	56,773	100
2001	67.0	23.4	6.0	0.6	2.9	57,937	100

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

Table 1a: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, 1999-2001 (%).

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment	Total %†	Total cases	*Had full-time employment before May in final year of study and still with that employer at time of GDS
Males							
1999	82.0	9.0	9.0	18.0	100	15,860	22.9
2000	84.5	7.6	7.9	15.5	100	14,839	20.6
2001	83.2	8.5	8.3	16.8	100	15,170	19.5
Females							
1999	80.0	7.3	12.7	20.0	100	23,124	16.3
2000	83.0	6.1	10.9	17.0	100	22,272	14.0
2001	82.9	6.1	11.0	17.1	100	23,516	12.8
Persons							
1999	80.8	8.0	11.2	19.2	100	39,003	19.0
2000	83.6	6.7	9.7	16.4	100	37,138	16.7
2001	83.0	7.0	10.0	17.0	100	38,794	15.4

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

Females were much more likely than males (11.0 per cent compared with 8.3 per cent) to have been in part-time or casual employment while seeking a full-time position. This difference (regularly seen in GDS figures) is likely to be a reflection of females' numerical dominance in fields of study such as teaching and nursing, in which there are strong opportunities for professional part-time employment.

Males (24.7 per cent) were slightly more likely than females (22.7 per cent) to have undertaken further full-time study in 2001 (see Table 1).

Table 1a shows that 15.5 per cent of those in full-time employment at the time of the survey already had that full-time position in their final year of study. A proportion of these respondents would have been in that full-time employment for a greater period of their study.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment by field of study. Labour market factors peculiar to some fields of study 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.

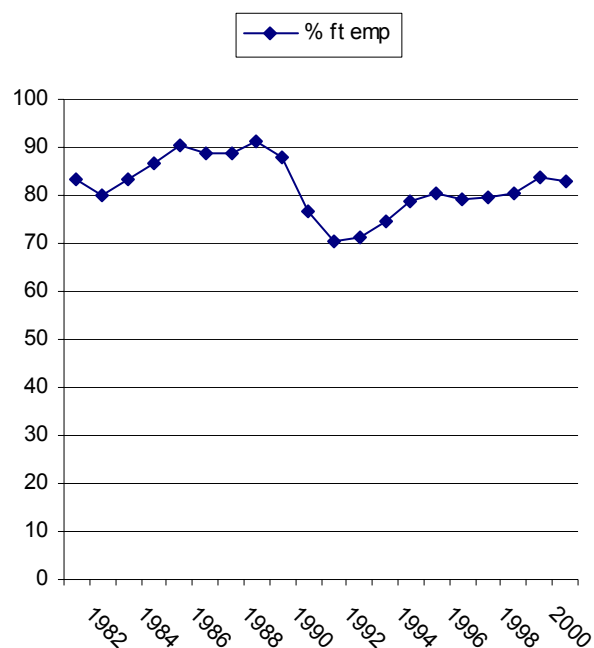


Figure 1: Percentage of bachelor degree graduates in full-time employment of those available for full-time employment, 1982-2001.

Table 2: Breakdown of bachelor degree graduates available for full-time employment, by field of study, 2001 (%).

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment	Total % †	Total cases	*Had full-time employment before May in final year of study and still with that employer at time of GDS
Agriculture	79.5	7.7	12.8	20.5	100	803	16.9
Architecture	83.3	7.1	9.6	16.7	100	508	11.3
Building	85.2	9.0	5.9	14.8	100	256	41.3
Urb & Reg Plann	87.1	6.1	6.8	12.9	100	132	16.5
Humanities	74.1	9.9	15.9	25.9	100	3589	16.9
Languages	77.8	9.3	12.9	22.2	100	387	12.3
Vis/Perf Arts	60.1	16.2	23.7	39.9	100	1353	5.5
Social Sciences	70.8	11.0	18.2	29.2	100	609	23.0
Psychology	70.4	10.9	18.7	29.6	100	1016	15.5
Social Work	83.5	4.7	11.8	16.5	100	510	7.3
Business Studies	82.7	7.3	10.0	17.3	100	5878	21.2
Accounting	93.4	4.7	1.9	6.6	100	2481	24.0
Economics	86.1	6.2	7.7	13.9	100	532	12.9
Education, Initial	84.2	3.2	12.6	15.8	100	4046	8.1
Education Post/Oth	85.2	3.0	11.8	14.8	100	1001	45.7
Aeronautical Eng	77.3	9.1	13.6	22.7	100	88	1.5
Chemical Eng	84.3	9.0	6.7	15.7	100	178	2.0
Civil Engineering	92.4	3.9	3.7	7.6	100	512	11.8
Electrical Eng	91.4	6.3	2.3	8.6	100	301	18.5
Electron/Comp Eng	89.1	8.7	2.2	10.9	100	403	7.2
Mechanical Eng	85.9	9.2	4.9	14.1	100	467	12.0
Mining Engineering	85.9	11.8	2.4	14.1	100	85	1.4
Other Engineering	80.4	10.4	9.2	19.6	100	316	22.0
Surveying	85.7	9.8	4.5	14.3	100	112	20.8
Dentistry	94.2	0.7	5.0	5.8	100	139	0.0
Health, Other	84.3	4.7	10.9	15.7	100	1379	16.7
Nursing, Initial	96.3	1.1	2.6	3.7	100	2166	3.0
Nursing, Post-initial	94.6	0.6	4.8	5.4	100	519	26.7
Pharmacy	99.6	0.4	0.0	0.4	100	262	0.4
Medicine	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	804	0.5
Rehabilitation	90.0	2.3	7.7	10.0	100	938	0.7
Law	95.8	2.0	2.2	4.2	100	901	14.6
Law, Other	91.2	3.7	5.1	8.8	100	839	41.3
Computer Science	81.0	12.4	6.7	19.0	100	2021	18.9
Life Sciences	70.2	12.9	16.8	29.8	100	2364	8.1
Mathematics	80.6	11.1	8.3	19.4	100	217	16.0
Chemistry	77.3	13.2	9.5	22.7	100	242	15.5
Physics	77.8	12.0	10.2	22.2	100	108	8.3
Geology	75.0	12.8	12.2	25.0	100	188	7.8
Veterinary Science	92.4	6.9	0.7	7.6	100	144	0.0
Total %	83.0	7.0	10.0	17.0	100		15.4
Total N	32,208	2,701	3,885	6,586		38,794	

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

For example, medical graduates, of whom 100.0 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.

Other fields with high proportions in full-time employment at the time of the survey were pharmacy (99.6 per cent), initial nursing education (96.3 per cent), and law (95.8 per cent).

While the national employment figure did not change notably between 2000 and 2001, some fields of study experienced a notable improvement, including languages (22.2 per cent seeking full-time employment, but down from 28.8 per cent in 2000), chemistry (22.7 per cent, down from 26.3 per cent), ‘law, other’ (8.8 per cent, down from 14.4 per cent) and social work (16.5 per cent, down from 20.7 per cent).

The fields of law and accounting, which experienced notable growth in starting salaries (discussed below), also enjoyed improved employment prospects

Respondents in visual and performing arts (23.7 per cent), psychology (18.7 per cent) and social sciences (18.2 per cent) were the most likely to have been working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment.

Those from visual and performing arts (16.2 per cent), chemistry (13.2 per cent), life sciences (12.9 per cent), and geology (12.8 per cent) were the most likely to have been without work while seeking full-time employment.

Post-initial nursing education at bachelor degree level generally covers hospital-trained nurses upgrading their qualifications to degree level. Many graduates were already in their full-time employment while studying (26.7 per cent in 2001 — see Table 2). Respondents from ‘education, post/other’ (45.7 per cent) and ‘law, other’ (41.3 per

cent) were also very likely to have been in full-time employment in their final year of study and still with that employer at the time of the survey. Like post-initial nursing education, ‘education, post/other’ graduates are generally people in full-time employment and with three-year training who are upgrading their qualifications to four-year degree level.

Graduate Starting Salaries

In 2001, the median graduate starting salary for bachelor degree graduates in their first full-time employment was \$35,000. This was 85.8 per cent of the annual rate of average weekly earnings (\$40,800 at the time), which was up from 84.2 per cent in 2000, 81.6 per cent in 1999, and represents the highest level recorded since 1991.

Table 3: Annual rate of average weekly earnings (AWE) and median graduate starting salaries (GSS), and relativity, 1977-2001 (\$,000).

	AWE	GSS	GSS % AWE
1977	9.6	9.6	100.0
1979	11.3	10.9	96.5
1980	12.5	11.8	94.4
1981	14.1	13.2	93.6
1982	16.5	14.9	90.3
1983	17.8	15.9	89.3
1984	19.6	17.2	87.8
1985	20.5	18.2	88.8
1986	22.1	19.8	89.6
1987	23.3	20.9	89.7
1988	24.9	23.0	92.4
1989	26.8	24.0	89.6
1990	28.7	24.9	86.8
1991	30.0	25.3	84.3
1992	31.1	25.7	82.6
1993	31.8	25.5	80.2
1994	32.5	26.0	80.0
1995	33.9	27.0	79.6
1996	34.8	28.0	80.5
1997	35.7	29.0	81.2
1998	37.2	30.0	80.6
1999	38.0	31.0	81.6
2000	39.2	33.0	84.2
2001	40.8	35.0	85.8

Table 4: Median starting salaries of bachelor degree graduates in first full-time employment and aged less than 25, 2001 (\$,000). Numbers in cells are shown below related salary figures.

	Aust. Govt	State Govt	Total Govt	Prof. Pract.	Ind./ Com.	Sch- ools	Tert. Ed.	Total Ed.	Total	Males	Fe- males
Humanities	33.5	33.0	33.0	36.0	30.0	36.6	33.0	36.3	32.0	33.0	32.0
	77	71	166	87	548	154	31	185	1061	184	877
Psychology	32.5	34.0	33.5	33.0	30.7	37.3	35.5	36.2	33.0	32.5	33.0
	27	49	79	24	166	13	17	30	320	46	274
Social Work	36.7	35.8	35.8		31.5				35.0	37.3	35.0
	11	74	90		32				135	6	129
Oth. Soc. Sci.	32.7	37.4	35.5	35.0	30.8	35.0		35.0	33.0	33.7	32.5
	26	104	136	53	130	10		16	349	94	255
Accounting	32.0	33.7	33.3	33.0	35.0				33.5	33.0	34.0
	30	44	82	514	254				898	351	547
Economics, Bus.	34.0	34.4	33.8	30.0	33.0		31.0	32.0	32.5	34.0	32.0
	121	135	280	310	1439		20	29	2164	831	1333
Law	34.9	35.1	35.0	36.0	40.0				36.0	38.0	35.0
	38	44	83	257	52				408	133	275
Education		33.1	33.2		30.0	36.0		36.0	36.0	36.9	36.0
		16	20		51	1340		1348	1456	218	1238
Physical Sci.	36.0		35.0	42.0	34.9			37.3	35.0	35.2	35.0
	14		22	16	76			13	132	70	62
Biological Sci.	33.7	33.6	34.0	33.5	31.0	35.8	35.0	35.0	33.0	34.0	32.4
	48	127	203	43	402	49	61	110	809	227	582
Mathematics	38.0		38.0		36.0				37.0	38.0	36.0
	17		22		54				90	39	51
Computer Sci.	38.9	37.5	38.0	38.7	40.0		37.0	37.0	40.0	40.0	40.0
	42	22	67	28	482		35	38	631	479	152
Agricultural Sci.		31.4	31.0		30.0				30.0	30.0	30.0
		46	60		147				233	126	107
Earth Sciences		36.3	36.3	33.5	37.0				35.9	36.9	34.0
		14	22	10	59				100	59	41
Veterinary Sci.				34.0					34.0	35.0	33.0
				70					73	19	54
Engineering	42.5	37.0	38.0	37.0	41.0		35.7	36.3	40.0	39.5	40.0
	54	83	151	222	565		13	15	968	763	205
Arch. & Bldg		33.0	34.1	25.5	31.0				30.0	30.0	29.5
		12	37	97	88				229	143	86
Medicine		45.0	45.0		40.0				45.0	50.0	45.0
		202	210		10				221	92	129
Paramedical St.	34.0	33.5	33.6	34.0	33.0	33.0	36.0	34.0	33.2	35.0	33.0
	80	1186	1285	36	597	21	16	37	2007	279	1728
Dentistry		43.0	45.0	47.4					46.4	50.0	45.0
		31	33	32					66	22	44
Pharmacy		27.0	27.0		25.0				25.0	25.0	25.0
		51	52		145				206	52	154
Optometry					44.0				43.0	41.0	45.0
					40				43	16	27
Art & Design			35.5		28.0	36.5		36.1	30.0	30.0	30.0
			10		191	55		62	309	86	223
All Fields	35.0	34.6	34.7	34.0	33.5	36.0	35.0	36.0	35.0	36.0	34.0
	619	2328	3111	1817	5531	1673	245	1918	12908	4335	8573
Males	37.5	36.0	36.0	34.3	36.0	36.8	36.0	36.5			
	220	532	812	762	2268	272	88	360			
Females	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.0	32.0	36.0	34.0	36.0			
	399	1796	2299	1055	3264	1401	157	1558			

* Empty cells indicate that there were no cases, or fewer than ten, in the data.

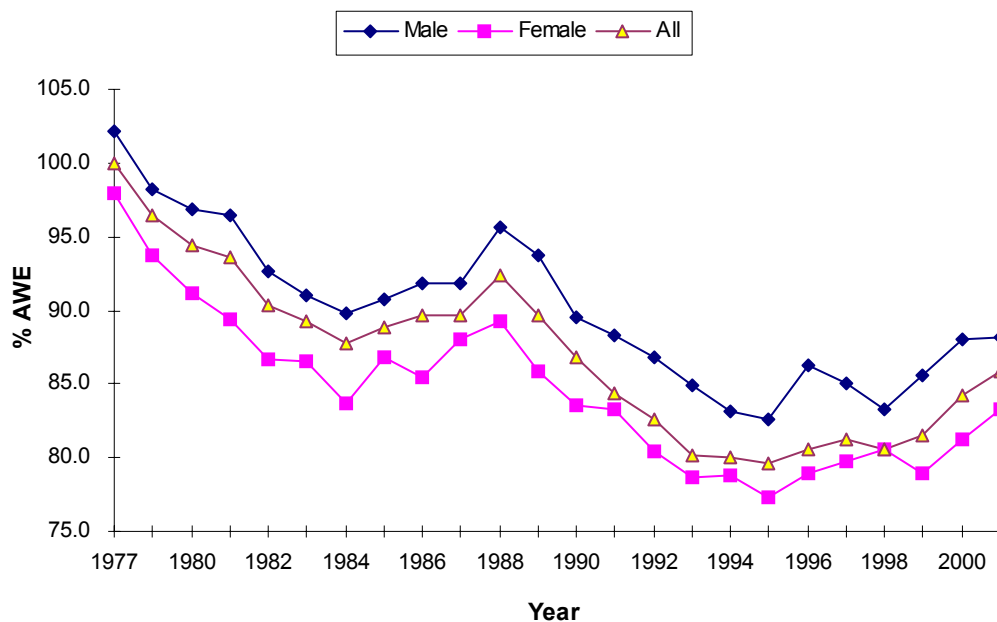


Figure 2: Male, female and all graduates' median starting salaries relative to the annual rate of average weekly earnings, 1977-2001.

Nevertheless, graduate starting salaries as a percentage of average weekly earnings remain well below levels experienced during the 1980s (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

New male graduates earned \$36,000, 88.2 per cent of average earnings, up markedly from 85.5 per cent in 1999 and 83.3 per cent in 1998. Salaries for females (\$34,000) rose to 83.3 per cent in 2001 from 81.2 per cent in 2000 and 78.9 per cent in 1999.

In dollar terms, the starting salary for all graduates rose by \$2,000 (or 6.1 per cent). Salaries for males rose by \$1,500 (4.3 per cent) while for females they rose by \$2,000 (6.2 per cent).

While dentistry graduates earned the highest median salary (\$46,400) this actually represents a fall from \$50,000 in the 2000 GDS. There are relatively few dentistry graduates, and this adds volatility to the annual figures.

The largest rises between 2000 and 2001 were for law (up \$3,800 from \$32,200) and accounting (up \$3,500 from \$30,000). There were also above average rises in the field labelled 'other social sciences', computer science, engineering and optometry. For many fields of study there was a small, or negligible, difference between salaries for

males and females. This was usually in favour of the male graduates. In two fields only (accounting and optometry) was there a difference greater than \$1,000 in favour of females. On the other hand, males earned markedly more than females in the fields of medicine and dentistry.

The overall salary for females was 94.4 per cent of males' earnings (92.3 per cent in 2000 and 1999). This figure is down from 96.8 per cent in 1998 and 95.0 per cent in 1997. Differences in starting salaries between males and females can be partly explained in terms of the differing enrolment and employment profiles of male and female students.

Males tend to have enrolled in the more highly paying fields of study while females tended to come from the middle and lower paying fields. An examination of the top five ranked fields in terms of starting salaries (listed in Tables 4 and 5; dentistry, medicine, optometry, engineering, and computer science) shows that they account for 31.6 per cent of male respondents but only 6.5 per cent of females.

Even when they graduate in the same field, differing employment options taken by males

Table 5: Fields of study ranked according to level of starting salary, 1997-2001.

	97	98	99	00	01
Dentistry	1	1	2	1	1
Medicine	2	2	1	2	2
Optometry	3	3	3	3	3
Engineering	5	=4	4	=5	=4
Computer Sci.	6	5	=5	=5	=4
Mathematics	7	8	6	4	5
Law	=10	=13	=11	12	=6
Education	=8	7	=7	6	=6
Earth Sci.	4	=4	=5	7	7
Social Work	=8	9	9	8	=8
Physical Sci.	9	=10	=7	10	=8
Vet. Sci.	=8	6	8	9	9
Accounting	=10	=13	=12	=15	10
Paramedical	=10	=10	10	13	11
Psychology	=10	12	13	11	=12
Biological Sci.	=10	=13	=11	=14	=12
Oth. Soc. Sci.	=13	=13	=14	=15	=12
Econ., Bus.	=10	11	=11	=14	13
Humanities	12	14	=14	=15	14
Arch. & Bldg	=13	15	=14	=14	=15
Agric. Sci	11	=13	=12	=15	=15
Art & Design	14	16	15	16	=15
Pharmacy	15	17	16	17	16

and females (for example, in terms of hours worked or the type of employer) can have an effect of salaries.

Most fields of study have shown a high degree of consistency over the years covered by GDS data. When ranked in terms of starting salaries, dentistry, medicine, optometry, engineering and computer science have maintained a high ranking in recent years (see Table 5).

The fields of architecture and pharmacy always have a relatively low ranking, due to the further training requirements these graduates must meet for professional registration. They go on to higher salaries in subsequent years.

Of note in 2001 are the big jumps for law (six places) and accounting (five places).

There was \$21,400 difference between the top and bottom ranked fields compared with \$25,000 in 2000 and \$19,000 in 1999. The middle rankings were not so widely separated. For example there was only \$3,000

difference between the sixth and 12th ranked fields.

Graduate Satisfaction

As measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), bachelor degree graduates' overall satisfaction with their courses has been slowly rising since 1995. Broad satisfaction remained at a high level, 89 per cent, in 2001 (see Figure 5). Dissatisfaction has been low over the same period.

The broad satisfaction figure represents the percentage of respondents answering '3', '4' and '5' on a five-point scale (with the 5th point indicating highest satisfaction). The dissatisfaction measure is made up of responses '1' and '2'.

The satisfaction figure represents the percentage of respondents answering '4' or '5' on the 5 point scale. This measure rose from 67 per cent in 1999 to 68 per cent in 2000 and in 2001.

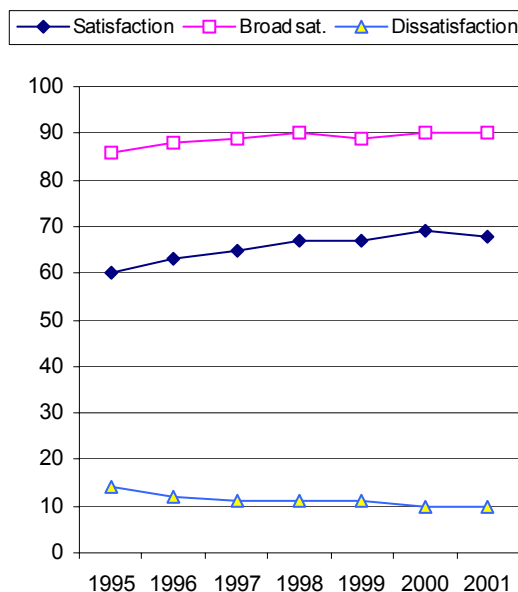


Figure 5: Level of satisfaction with course, bachelor degree graduates, 1995-2001 (preliminary).

Further details about graduate destinations, starting salaries and the CEQ can be found in the forthcoming reports *Graduate Destination Survey 2001*, *Graduate Starting Salaries, 2001*, *Postgrad 2001* and *Course Experience Questionnaire, 2001*. To order copies, please call the GCCA on (03) 8344 9333.

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