



Graduates are looking for more from their employers than a high salary...
How can you make your recruitment package more attractive to today's graduates?

Welcome to Snapshot: University & Beyond 2008!

University & Beyond is a comprehensive source of information about the plans and expectations of university students after graduation. The insights contained within the *University & Beyond 2008* report allow employers to more effectively tailor their recruitment packages to attract the best graduates, and should allow universities and students to align their jobseeker training and job search strategies to better fit with employer requirements.

What can you expect to find in the *University & Beyond 2008* report?

- ▼ The attitudes and expectations of more than **27,500 university students** in Australia.
- ▼ In addition, key findings from two of Graduate Careers Australia's flagship surveys, the Graduate Outlook Survey of graduate employers, and the Australian Graduate Survey which investigates the outcomes of graduates from Australian universities.
- ▼ Information about the best methods for attracting the top graduates.
- ▼ Students' expectations of salary and remuneration in their post-university jobs, including a comparison of actual graduate salary outcomes.
- ▼ Student and employer ratings of graduates' core employability skills.
- ▼ An investigation of how confident students are of securing employment after university.
- ▼ A special section focusing on the attitudes and expectations of international students.

This snapshot report provides an overview of just some of the insights contained within the complete *University and Beyond 2008* report, which is available for purchase from Graduate Careers Australia's online shop at www.graduatecareers.com.au or by using the order form at the back of this report.

Attracting the Best Graduates

What do today's students want from their employment and what will attract them to an organisation? This section of the *University & Beyond 2008* report examines how Australian domestic students find prospective employers and what attributes they consider to be attractive when choosing between prospective employers.

Some of the key findings in this section include:

- ▶ The majority of students use a variety of avenues when searching for more information about graduate employers (Figure 1).
- ▶ Males were more interested in 'extrinsic' rewards, such as higher salaries, while females were more interested in 'intrinsic' rewards such as making a contribution to society or conducting interesting and challenging work.
- ▶ Employers generally overestimated the importance students place on 'opportunities for advancement' when evaluating different employment options.
- ▶ Overall, the most attractive non-cash benefit to students was company-paid training and development and the least attractive was mobile phones, however the attractiveness of these and other benefits varied considerably by field of education.
- ▶ As well as being the most attractive benefit, company-paid training and development was also the benefit that students most likely expected to receive from an employer.

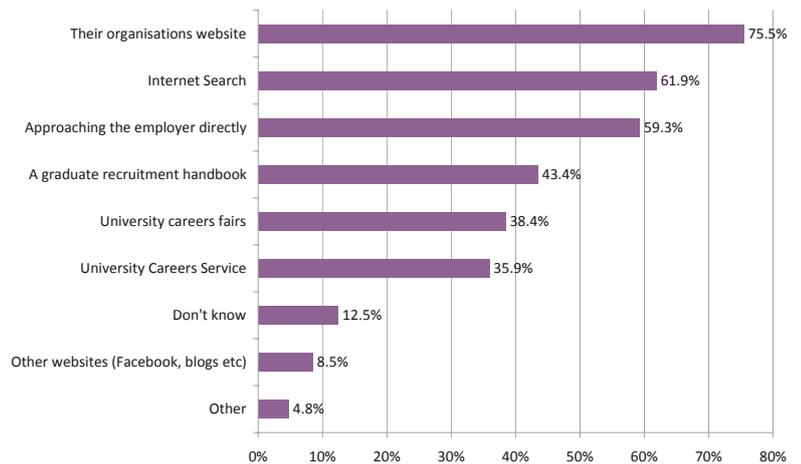


Figure 1: Methods to find out more about a graduate employer, domestic students, *University & Beyond 2008* (%).

Salary and Remuneration

Base salary, remuneration, salary packaging, superannuation... All of these things can be confusing for today's graduates, particularly those who have little or no full-time work experience. This section of the *University & Beyond 2008* report examines what students expect from their post-university careers in terms of benefits and remuneration, and compares these expectations with actual graduate salary outcomes.

Some of the key findings in this section include:

- ▶ At the broadest level, undergraduate students, particularly younger students, overestimated their value in the employment market, while postgraduate students underestimated their value. However, students in Health/Medicine/Dentistry, Sciences and Veterinary Science had realistic salary expectations.
- ▶ Although students indicated that they would consider the overall remuneration package when choosing a graduate job, they also stressed that the salary component would need to be comparable to other offers (Figure 2).
- ▶ Employers generally overestimated the importance that students place on the salary component when evaluating different graduate job opportunities.
- ▶ Overall, the majority of students would sacrifice a job with a higher salary for one which offered the potential for work/life balance, however this varied by field of education.



Figure 2: Domestic students' level of agreement with statements regarding their employment decision-making process, *University & Beyond 2008* (%).

Students' Core Employability Skills

The development of core employability skills resulting from a university education is a frequently discussed topic. Graduate employers often express a desire for 'well-rounded' applicants who have a range of core 'job-ready' employability skills, and not necessarily those applicants with outstanding academic achievements. This section of the *University & Beyond 2008* report examines students' self-ratings of their own core employability skills at various points throughout their university education and compares these to employer ratings of graduates' core employability skills.

Some of the key findings in this section include:

- Overall, students felt that their learning skills were strongest, and that they were weakest in regards to the technical skills resulting from their course.
- Employers consistently rated students' core employability skill levels much lower than the students' self-ratings of the same skills, with the exception of 'technology'.
- Students reported a growth in the strength of their core employability skills as they progressed through their course, particularly in their technical skills resulting from their course (Figure 3).
- Students generally had a good understanding of what employers considered the most important graduate skills and attributes, although they underestimated the importance of 'cultural/social alignment' and 'values fit'.
- Students' perceptions of which skills and attributes are most important to employers varied considerably based on their age.

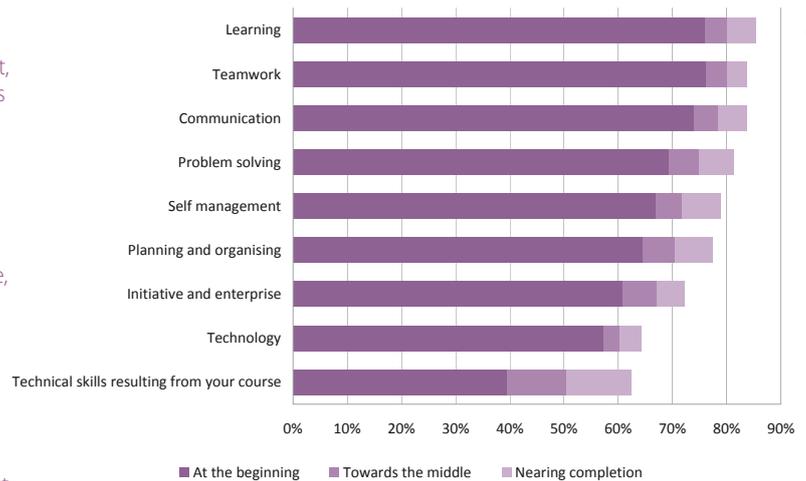


Figure 3: Increase in domestic students' core employability skills throughout their course, percentage of students rating their skills as Fairly strong/Very strong, University & Beyond 2008 (%).

Students' Expected Employment Outcomes

How confident are students about finding suitable employment after graduation? Once they are in their ideal job how long do they intend to stay? This section of the *University & Beyond 2008* report investigates what Australian domestic students expect to happen in regards to their employment in their post-university lives.

Some of the key findings in this section include:

- While two-thirds of students indicated that they were confident of finding any job after graduation, only a quarter were confident of getting their preferred job (Figure 4).
- Engineering and Surveying students were the most confident of securing full-time employment after graduation, but were, at the broadest level, only the fifth-most likely field of education to do so.
- Males were more likely than females to expect to achieve a higher position within five years of finishing their course.
- Female students were more likely to expect to achieve more job security or better work/life balance within five years of finishing their course.
- Employers generally underestimated the amount of time that students intend to remain with their first employer after graduation.

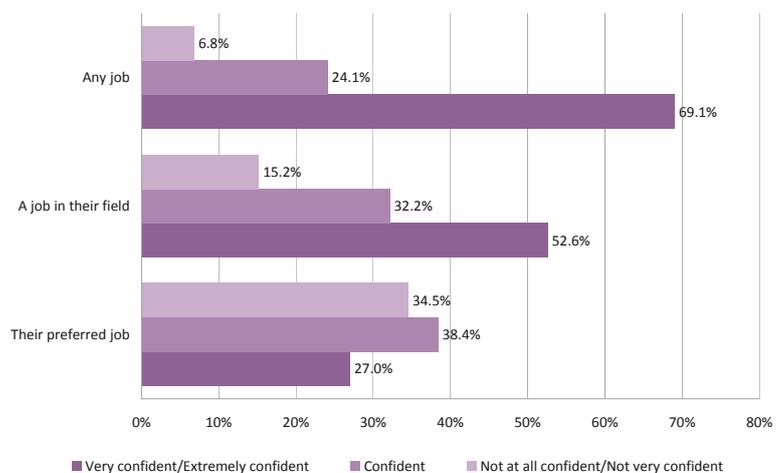


Figure 4: Domestic students' post-graduation employment confidence levels, University & Beyond 2008 (%).

University & Beyond 2008: Snapshot Report

Focus on International Students

Around a quarter of responses to the survey were from fee-paying international students. The expectations and perceptions of domestic and international students differed in a number of key areas, so this section of the *University & Beyond 2008* report has been included in order to examine these differences between international and domestic students.

Some of the key findings in this section include:

- International students were consistently less confident of finding suitable full-time employment after graduation than domestic students, although this gap became less pronounced for students' preferred jobs (Figure 5).
- Additional leave was a less attractive non-cash benefit to international students, than it was to domestic students.
- International students consistently rated themselves lower in terms of their core employability skills than domestic students, particularly in regards to their communication skills.
- The salary expectations of international students were lower than domestic students, but international students also tended to earn less in their first full-time jobs.
- In contrast to domestic students, salary was the primary factor in the employment decision-making process for international students.

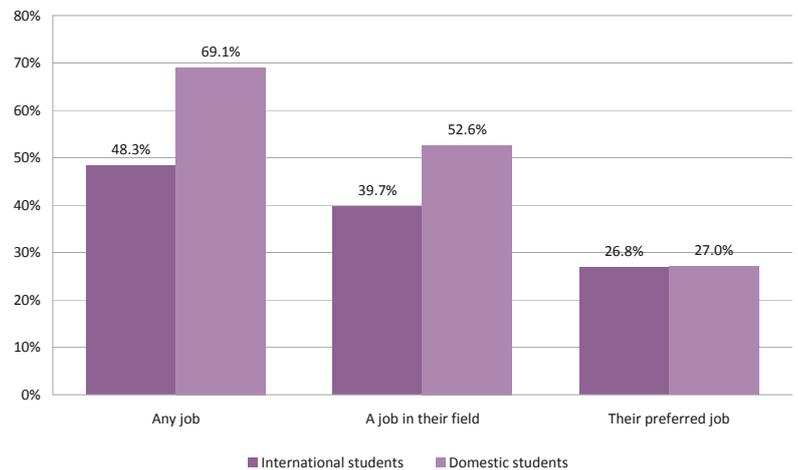


Figure 5: Students' employment confidence levels by residency, Very confident/Extremely confident ratings only, University & Beyond 2008 (%).

The Complete University & Beyond 2008 Report

This snapshot report has presented a brief overview of some of the insights presented in the complete *University & Beyond 2008* report, which is available for purchase from Graduate Careers Australia (due for release early 2009). The complete report examines all of these areas in much greater detail, and provides insights which would be valuable for any organisation intending to recruit university graduates in the future.

Other valuable material related to graduate issues can be found at www.graduatecareers.com.au.

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