

Beyond Graduation 2011

The report of the Beyond Graduation Survey



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Welcome to *Beyond Graduation 2011*, the third annual report into the activities, outcomes and experiences of Australian higher education graduates three years after the completion of their studies. This report is based on the 2010 Beyond Graduation Survey (BGS), which was conducted by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) in collaboration with 34 Australian higher education institutions (see Table A1). Graduates who completed a course of study at an Australian higher education institution in 2007 and provided a response to the 2008 Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) were invited by email to complete an online survey concerning their experiences since course completion. A total of 11,807 usable responses to the 2011 BGS were received, representing an increase of 16.8 per cent over the 2010 survey in which 31 higher education institutions participated.¹ The sample of secured responses was found to be representative of the graduate population in terms of sex ratio, age structure and broad field of education. As such, the survey data were analysed unweighted.

The BGS questionnaire addressed graduates' employment and further study activities as at 30 April for the years 2011, 2010 and 2009. In addition, the questionnaire provided graduates with the opportunity to give a retrospective assessment of their higher education course experience and to make a self-assessment of their employability skills, both immediately after course completion and at the time of the survey. Data on graduates' personal characteristics and activities in 2008 were imputed into the data file from the 2008 AGS.

The focus of this report is Australian domestic bachelor degree graduates, which represents the largest group of respondents. Summary outcomes figures for Australian domestic postgraduates are presented in the final section of this report. Respondent characteristics are presented in Table A2.

Graduate Destinations

At the time of the 2008 AGS, 79.0 per cent of male graduates and 70.7 per cent of female graduates reported that they considered themselves to be available for full-time employment—that is, in or seeking full-time employment (see Table 1). By 2011, the proportion of male graduates available for full-time employment had increased to 87.0 per cent, which mainly reflected a decrease in the number of graduates in further full-time study. The proportion of female graduates available for full-time employment increased to 76.8 per cent by 2011, which again mainly reflected a large decrease in the number of graduates in further study. Female graduates were consistently more likely than male graduates to be undertaking further full-time study, to be in part-time employment with no desire for full-time employment, or to be unavailable for further study or any employment.

Of the graduates who were available for full-time employment, the proportion who had secured full-time employment increased considerably in the first year after course completion (see Table 2). At the time of the 2008 AGS, 83.9 per cent of male graduates and 82.8 per cent of female graduates were in full-time employment, and by 2009 this had increased to 91.2 per cent and 89.1 per cent respectively. This was naturally accompanied by a general decline in the proportion of graduates in the full-time labour market who were either in part-time employment or were unemployed.

¹ Graduate Careers Australia. (2011). *Beyond Graduation 2010*. Melbourne: Author.

Table 1. Main activity of bachelor graduates, by sex, 2008–11 (% , n)

	Available for full-time employment (Table 2)	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 n
Males							
2008	79.0	13.9	4.7	0.0	2.5	100	2,078
2009	83.3	10.7	3.7	0.3	2.0	100	1,815
2010	85.0	9.4	4.0	0.3	1.4	100	1,892
2011	87.0	8.2	3.5	0.1	1.3	100	2,106
Females							
2008	70.7	17.9	8.4	0.0	3.0	100	4,023
2009	72.3	13.0	10.3	0.5	4.0	100	3,675
2010	74.0	12.3	9.1	0.6	4.0	100	3,779
2011	76.8	10.9	8.4	0.7	3.2	100	4,036
Total							
2008	73.6	16.5	7.1	0.0	2.8	100	6,101
2009	75.9	12.3	8.1	0.4	3.3	100	5,490
2010	77.7	11.3	7.4	0.5	3.1	100	5,671
2011	80.3	9.9	6.7	0.5	2.6	100	6,142

Table 2. Bachelor graduates available for full-time employment, by sex and employment status, 2008–11 (% , n)

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, working part time or casual	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Total seeking full-time employment	TOTAL	TOTAL n
Males						
2008	83.9	9.5	6.6	16.1	100	1,642
2009	91.2	4.4	4.4	8.8	100	1,511
2010	91.9	4.0	4.0	8.0	100	1,609
2011	93.8	3.0	3.2	6.2	100	1,832
Females						
2008	82.8	11.9	5.3	17.2	100	2,846
2009	89.1	7.2	3.7	10.9	100	2,656
2010	90.5	6.0	3.5	9.5	100	2,798
2011	92.2	4.9	2.9	7.8	100	3,099
Total						
2008	83.2	11.1	5.8	16.9	100	4,488
2009	89.8	6.2	4.0	10.2	100	4,167
2010	91.0	5.3	3.7	9.0	100	4,407
2011	92.8	4.2	3.0	7.2	100	4,931

Full-time employment rates are presented by field of education in Table 3. Graduates from the fields of health, engineering and related technologies, and architecture and building enjoyed particularly strong employment rates immediately after course completion, which persisted through to the time of the 2011 survey. The creative arts field recorded low full-time employment rates at the time of the 2008 AGS, but experienced strong employment growth over the next three years. Employment rates were also relatively low for natural and physical sciences graduates throughout this period. It is important to note that these figures do not necessarily reflect the proportion of graduates in jobs that are related to their respective courses of study. This point will be addressed later in Figure 1.

Table 3. Bachelor graduates working full time as a proportion of those available for full-time employment), by sex and broad field of education, 2008–11 (% , n)

	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Males								
Natural and physical sciences	71.2	118	84.5	110	85.6	125	88.8	143
Information technology	82.2	180	94.7	150	95.2	167	98.0	196
Engineering and related technologies	93.5	260	96.1	230	96.7	242	97.8	279
Architecture and building	94.9	39	91.7	36	97.4	39	98.0	49
Agriculture and environmental studies	84.6	39	89.2	37	97.4	39	95.3	43
Health	91.0	144	93.4	137	90.8	142	93.1	145
Education	84.0	100	89.1	92	92.4	92	94.3	106
Management and commerce	86.0	392	93.5	354	94.6	370	95.5	424
Society and culture	78.6	295	88.8	286	88.1	312	89.6	357
Creative arts	64.0	75	77.2	79	79.0	81	86.7	90
TOTAL	83.9	1,642	91.2	1,511	91.9	1,609	93.8	1,832
Females								
Natural and physical sciences	78.2	216	84.2	222	88.9	262	90.1	274
Information technology	73.0	37	84.8	33	94.3	35	92.1	38
Engineering and related technologies	91.4	70	95.6	68	95.6	68	94.4	72
Architecture and building	91.5	47	94.3	35	90.7	43	91.7	60
Agriculture and environmental studies	70.8	48	72.3	47	85.4	48	89.1	55
Health	93.8	600	95.6	521	95.0	522	94.8	554
Education	85.2	359	90.5	337	91.4	350	92.8	374
Management and commerce	84.9	465	93.0	428	94.7	452	95.1	507
Society and culture	77.0	755	87.1	734	88.1	766	90.9	857
Creative arts	69.9	249	77.5	231	80.6	252	88.0	308
TOTAL	82.8	2,846	89.1	2,656	90.5	2,798	92.2	3,099
Total								
Natural and physical sciences	75.7	334	84.3	332	87.9	387	89.7	417
Information technology	80.6	217	92.9	183	95.0	202	97.0	234
Engineering and related technologies	93.0	330	96.0	298	96.5	310	97.2	351
Architecture and building	93.0	86	93.0	71	93.9	82	94.5	109
Agriculture and environmental studies	77.0	87	79.8	84	90.8	87	91.8	98
Health	93.3	744	95.1	658	94.1	664	94.4	699
Education	85.0	459	90.2	429	91.6	442	93.1	480
Management and commerce	85.4	857	93.2	782	94.6	822	95.3	931
Society and culture	77.4	1,050	87.5	1,020	88.1	1,078	90.5	1,214
Creative arts	68.5	324	77.4	310	80.2	333	87.7	398
TOTAL	83.2	4,488	89.8	4,167	91.0	4,407	92.8	4,931

Industry of employment

The industries employing bachelor degree graduates did not change considerably in the years following course completion (see Table 4). Full-time employed male graduates were most likely to be in professional, scientific and technical services, followed by public administration and safety, and education and training. Female graduates were most likely to be employed in the healthcare and social assistance industry, although the proportion of graduates employed in this industry fell from 26.6 per cent in 2008 to 22.8 per cent in 2011. Education and training, and professional, scientific and technical services were also relatively common employment industries for female graduates.

Occupation

While the industries employing graduates did not change greatly in the years immediately following course completion, the occupations held by graduates did vary over this period. As shown in Table 5, the proportion of graduates of both sexes employed in managerial roles increased considerably, as did the proportion of female graduates employed in professional roles. This was accompanied by a

Table 4. Employing industries, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, by sex, 2008 and 2011 (% , n)

	Males		Females		Total	
	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.9	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.3
Mining	3.2	3.5	1.8	1.7	2.3	2.3
Manufacturing	5.5	5.0	2.6	2.7	3.7	3.5
Electricity, gas and water supply	2.3	2.3	1.3	1.1	1.7	1.5
Construction	2.6	2.5	0.6	0.6	1.4	1.3
Wholesale trade	0.9	1.4	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.9
Retail trade	4.6	2.0	4.4	2.2	4.5	2.1
Accommodation and food services	1.5	1.0	1.6	0.9	1.5	0.9
Transport, postal and warehousing	2.1	2.9	0.8	0.6	1.3	1.5
Information media and telecommunications	3.9	3.6	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.3
Financial and insurance services	9.1	8.0	4.1	4.0	6.0	5.5
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	26.2	25.7	17.2	17.8	20.5	20.7
Administrative and support services	2.4	1.0	2.1	2.0	2.2	1.7
Public administration and safety	11.6	14.3	10.0	13.5	10.6	13.8
Education and training	10.1	12.4	19.5	22.2	16.0	18.6
Health care and social assistance	9.8	9.4	26.6	22.8	20.4	17.9
Arts and recreation services	1.1	2.0	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.7
Other services	1.2	1.8	1.6	2.1	1.5	2.0
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n	1,362	1,529	2,333	2,647	3,695	4,176

Table 5. Broad occupation types, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, by sex, 2008 and 2011 (% , n)

	Males		Females		Total	
	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011
Managers	8.2	14.7	4.6	9.0	5.9	11.1
Professionals	71.5	71.2	72.6	75.3	72.2	73.8
Technicians and trades workers	4.8	3.2	3.0	1.8	3.6	2.3
Community and personal service workers	4.3	3.0	5.0	4.1	4.8	3.7
Clerical and administrative workers	7.9	6.8	12.3	8.9	10.7	8.1
Other occupations	3.3	1.0	2.5	0.9	2.8	0.9
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n	1,325	1,519	2,284	2,636	3,609	4,155

general decline in the proportion of graduates employed in 'lower-skilled' occupations. By 2011, male graduates were more likely than their female counterparts to be employed in a managerial capacity, while female graduates were more likely to be employed in professional roles. Females remained more likely than males to be employed in clerical or administrative roles three years after the course completion, although only around one in ten female graduates were so employed.

Importance of qualification

Being in full-time employment, even if in a managerial or professional capacity, does not necessarily mean that a graduate is in employment related to their course of study. To investigate this potential disparity between any employment and *relevant* employment, graduates were asked to rate the importance of the qualification that they completed in 2007 to their main paid job using a five-point response format with categories labelled *formal requirement*, *important*, *somewhat important*, *not important* and *don't know*. The relative proportions of graduates who considered the qualification they completed in 2007 to be a formal requirement or important to their main paid jobs in 2008 and 2011 are given in Figure 1. Graduates who responded *don't know* are excluded from the figures.

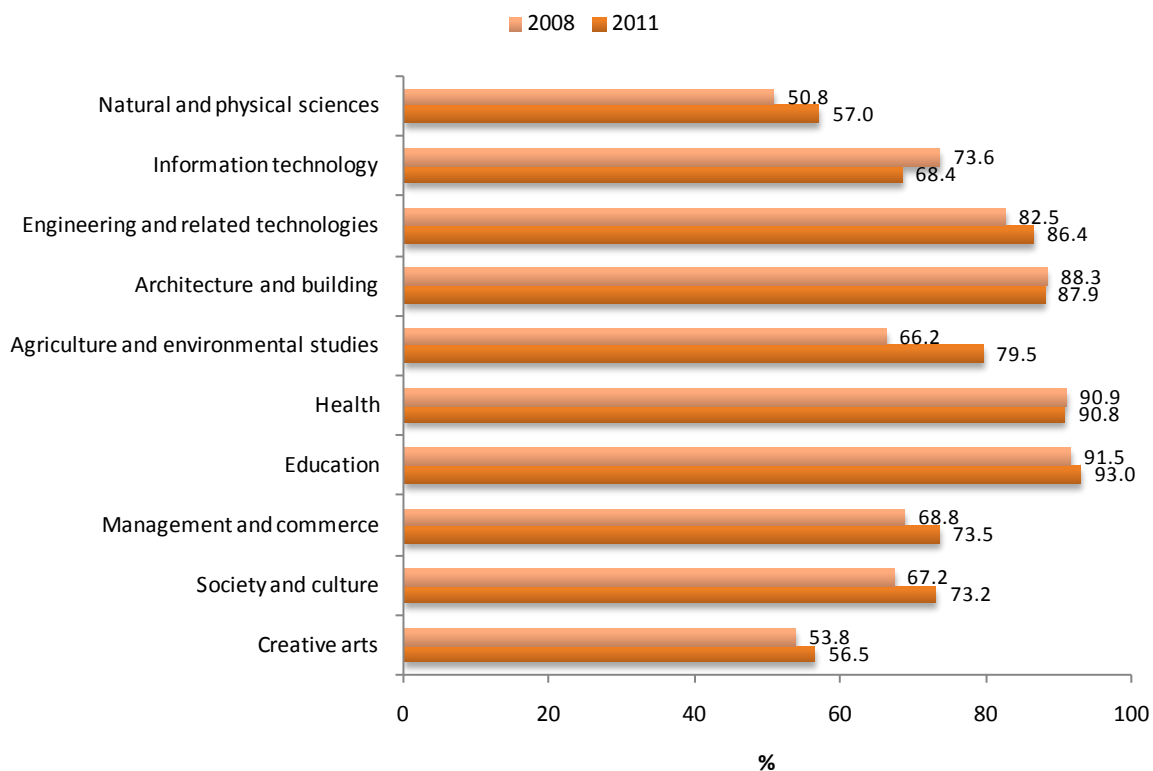


Figure 1. Qualification important to main paid job, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, by broad field of education, 2008 and 2011 (%)

There is considerable variation across fields of education concerning the proportion of graduates who believed that their qualification was important to their main paid job. Graduates from the fields of education, health, architecture and building, and engineering and related technologies were the most likely to be employed in a job for which their qualification is important, while graduates from the fields of natural and physical sciences, and creative arts were, by a considerable margin, the least likely to feel that the qualification they completed is important to their main paid job. The only field of education that recorded a notable increase in graduates employed in non-relevant jobs over the three-year span of the survey was information technology, and this was only minor.

It is important, however, to emphasise that graduates in non-relevant jobs (by our definition) are not necessarily in unrewarding jobs or even jobs that are not in line with their own career goals. It simply means that they are employed in jobs that are not closely related to the degree they completed in 2007. While some graduates may take longer than others to secure work in their chosen field, others may develop a career in a different, potentially unrelated field. The nature of these non-relevant jobs is examined in Table 6, in which occupation types are crossed with graduates' perceptions of the importance of their qualification to their main paid job. It is worthy of note that 46.0 per cent of graduates who indicated that their qualification was *not* important to their main paid employment in 2008 were employed in managerial or professional roles. By 2011, this figure had reached 59.5 per cent. This finding helps to dispel the myth that graduates working in jobs unrelated to their field of study must be trapped in unrewarding or unskilled jobs.

Table 6. Aggregated occupation type, by importance of qualification to main paid job, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, 2008 and 2011 (% , n)

	Important		Somewhat important		Not important		Total	
	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011
Managerial/professional	84.9	90.0	64.8	73.0	46.0	59.5	77.9	85.0
Other	15.1	10.0	35.2	27.0	54.0	40.5	22.1	15.0
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n	2,654	3,234	406	526	415	375	3,475	4,135

Table 7. Average weekly working hours for full-time employed bachelor graduates, by broad field of education and sex, 2008 and 2011 (hours)

	Males		Females		Total	
	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011
Natural and physical sciences	40.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	40.2	41.4
Information technology	40.3	41.3	39.0	41.7	40.1	41.4
Engineering and related technologies	42.8	44.5	41.3	43.0	42.5	44.2
Architecture and building	39.6	44.2	38.9	41.3	39.2	42.6
Agriculture and environmental studies	41.7	40.6	38.8	39.9	40.2	40.2
Health	43.4	44.1	40.7	41.0	41.2	41.6
Education	40.6	42.4	40.7	41.7	40.7	41.8
Management and commerce	42.2	44.5	40.1	41.7	41.1	43.0
Society and culture	40.3	42.8	39.2	40.8	39.5	41.4
Creative arts	40.3	41.5	38.6	40.5	38.9	40.7
TOTAL	41.5	43.3	40.0	41.2	40.6	41.9
TOTAL n	1,377	1,719	2,356	2,858	3,733	4,577

Average weekly working hours

Average weekly working hours for full-time employed bachelor degree graduates in 2008 and 2011 are presented in Table 7, split by field of education and sex. At an overall level, male graduates tended to work longer hours, although much variation in working hours was observed between different fields of education. Graduates from the field of engineering and related technologies tended to work the longest hours in both time periods. In spite of the shift towards more highly-skilled occupations between 2008 and 2011, average weekly working hours increased by just 1.8 hours for male graduates and 1.2 hours for female graduates over this period.

Employment seeking behaviour

In addition to being asked about their current employment, full-time employed bachelor degree graduates were asked whether they were actively seeking employment at the time of the survey (see Figure 2). As expected, these figures broadly mirror those presented in Figure 1 concerning whether graduates felt that their qualification was important to their main paid job. Graduates from the fields of health and education, who were the most likely to be in relevant employment, were also the least likely to be seeking alternative employment. Creative arts graduates, around half of whom were in non-relevant employment, were also quite likely to be actively seeking alternative employment. The fields of engineering and related technologies, natural and physical sciences, and health were the only ones in which a greater proportion of graduates were seeking alternative employment three years after course completion than at the time of the 2008 AGS.

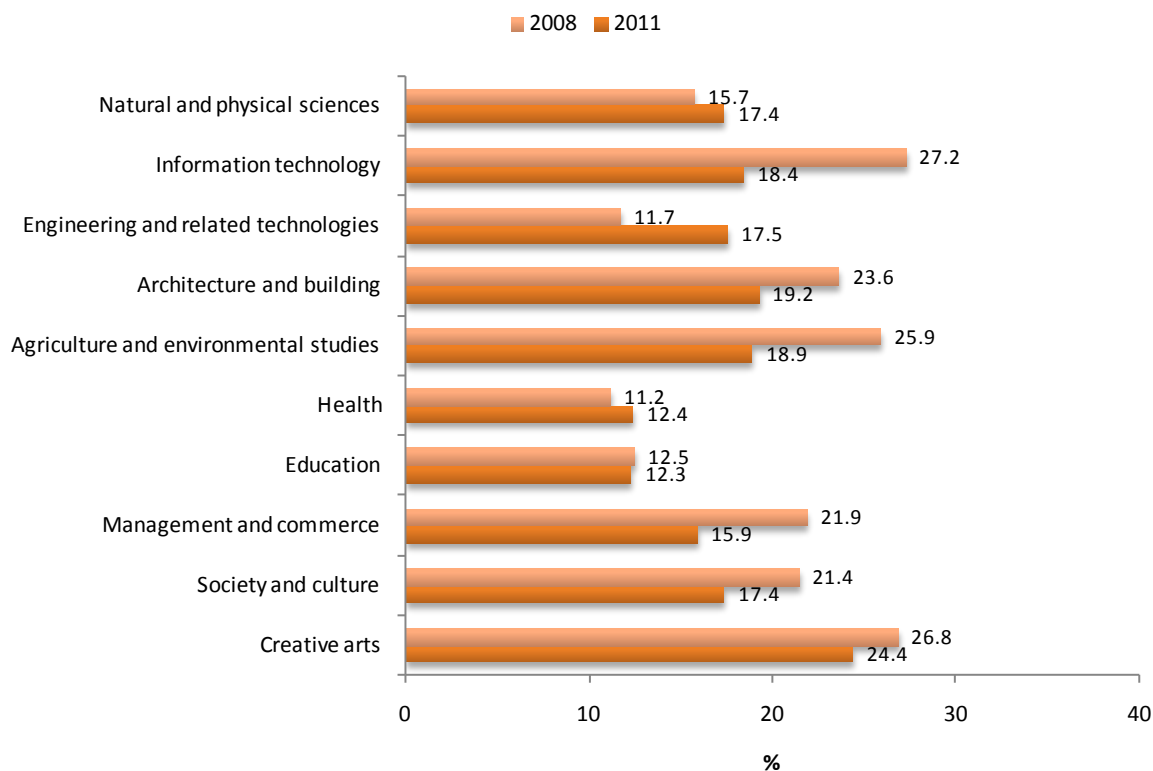


Figure 2. Graduates seeking alternative work, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, by broad field of education, 2008 and 2011 (%)

Table 8. Interstate mobility of bachelor graduates in full-time employment, 2008 and 2011 (%), n

State of 2008 job	State of 2011 job									TOTAL n
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	TOTAL	
NSW	90.2	2.5	2.1	0.2	1.3	0.3	0.7	2.8	100.0	610
Vic.	3.2	92.2	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.3	1.2	100.0	756
Qld	4.3	2.9	88.5	1.2	2.2	0.0	0.2	0.7	100.0	417
SA	1.5	3.0	3.0	90.5	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.5	100.0	201
WA	2.2	4.0	0.9	0.9	91.6	0.0	0.4	0.0	100.0	225
Tas.	2.0	7.8	5.9	2.0	5.9	72.5	2.0	2.0	100.0	51
NT	8.3	5.6	5.6	2.8	2.8	2.8	66.7	5.6	100.0	36
ACT	10.9	5.1	1.4	2.2	0.7	0.7	0.7	78.3	100.0	138

Interstate mobility

For the first time in 2011, the BGS investigated the interstate mobility of graduates in the full-time workforce between 2008 and 2011 (see Table 8). The large percentage figures along the diagonal in this table indicates that the majority of graduates are working in the same state or territory in 2011 as they were in 2008. Graduates who began their post-study careers in one of Australia's mainland states tended to be far less mobile than graduates who were employed in Tasmania, the Northern Territory or the Australian Capital Territory. Out of these, graduates who began their careers in the Northern Territory were the most likely to move interstate within three years of course completion, with one-third having done so by the time of the 2011 BGS.

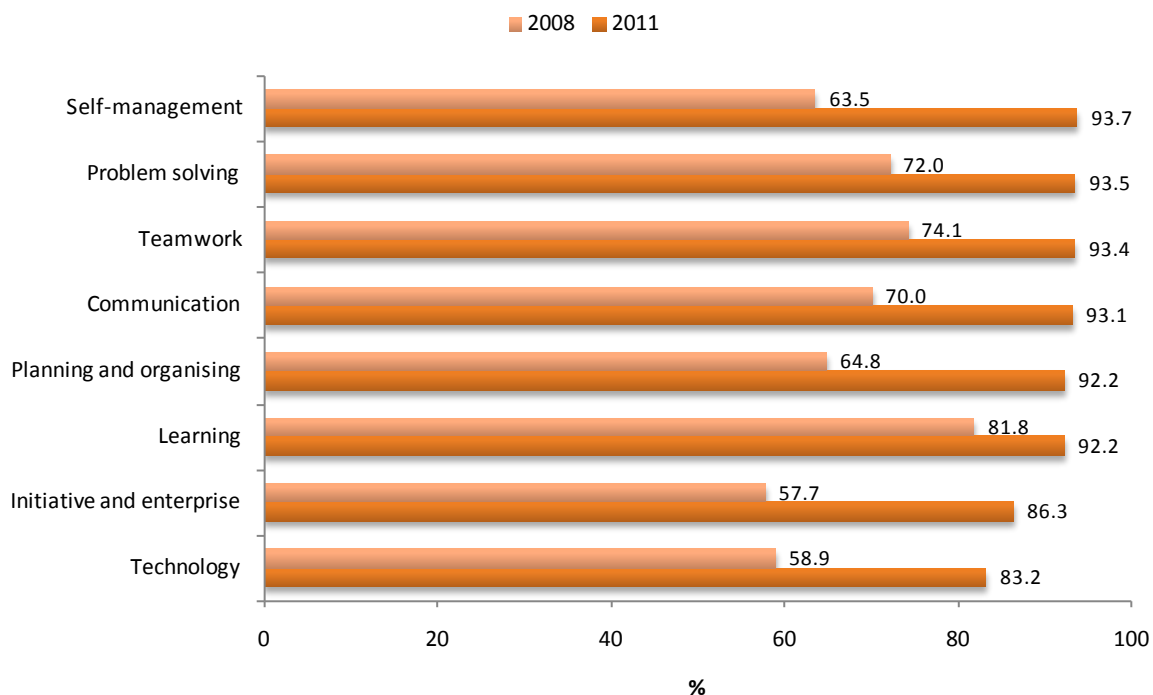


Figure 3. Self-rated employability skills, high/very high, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, by broad field of education, 2008 and 2011 (%)

Employability skills

In order to gain an understanding of the impact that three years of additional employment and life experience had on their perceptions of their employability skills, full-time employed bachelor degree graduates were asked to provide a self-rating of their employability skills immediately after course completion and again three years later. Eight aspects were investigated using a five-point response format with categories *very low*, *low*, *moderate*, *high* and *very high*.² The proportion of graduates who rated their skills as being either *high* or *very high* are presented in Figure 3.

It should be noted that, unlike the majority of time-series comparisons presented in this report, these figures are not based on true longitudinal data captured at two distinct points in time. Because employability skills are not a topic of investigation in the AGS, graduates who completed the 2011 BGS were asked to retrospectively evaluate their own employability skills in 2008.

Shortly after course completion in 2008, most full-time employed bachelor degree graduates felt that they possessed a high level of skill with regard to learning (81.8 per cent), teamwork (74.1 per cent), problem solving (72.0 per cent) and communication (70.0 per cent). Conversely, only 57.7 per cent of graduates rated their initiative and enterprise highly, while just 58.9 per cent of graduates felt that they possessed a high level of technological skill. By 2011, an even greater majority of graduates rated their employability skills highly, with ‘initiative and enterprise’ and ‘technology’ the only two skills that saw less than 90 per cent of graduates provide such a rating (86.3 per cent and 83.2 per cent respectively). It is evident from these figures that many graduates who completed the

² This replaces the five-point ‘quality’ response format used in earlier surveys.

Table 9. Broad occupation types, by sex, bachelor graduates in part-time employment, 2008 and 2011 (% , n)

	Males		Females		Total	
	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011
Managers	3.7	1.4	2.6	4.3	2.9	3.6
Professionals	39.0	66.8	38.9	65.1	38.9	65.5
Technicians and trades workers	5.7	6.7	4.0	2.6	4.4	3.5
Community and personal service workers	12.4	8.2	15.0	9.0	14.3	8.8
Clerical and administrative workers	12.9	6.3	15.6	10.8	14.9	9.8
Other occupations	26.3	10.6	23.9	8.3	24.6	8.8
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL n	403	208	1,087	724	1,490	932

2011 survey felt that their employability skills had improved greatly since course completion, with especially large increases observed regarding self-management (30.2 percentage points), initiative and enterprise (28.6 percentage points) and planning and organising (27.4 percentage points). These are skills that are arguably better developed in the workplace than the lecture theatre, which makes these results unsurprising. The skill of learning, which is better developed in an academic setting, exhibited the smallest growth in the years following course completion (10.4 percentage points).

Graduates in part-time employment

Because the vast majority of employed graduates were in full-time employment at the time of the survey, this report has thus far focused predominantly on full-time employed graduates. In order to present a comprehensive picture of graduate employment three years after course completion, the activities of part-time employed bachelor degree graduates are discussed in this section.

As shown in Table 9, graduates employed part time immediately after course completion were typically in 'lower-skilled' occupations, with only around four-in-ten of these graduates employed in managerial or professional roles. By contrast, over three-quarters of full-time employed graduates were employed in managerial or professional roles immediately after course completion (see Table 4). Three years later, around two-thirds of part-time employed graduates were in professional employment (66.8 per cent of males and 65.1 per cent of females), although part-time employed graduates were still less likely than their full-time employed counterparts to hold a managerial role.

Graduates in further study

For many graduates, the completion of a course of study in 2007 did not represent the end of their learning journey. As shown in Figure 4, 25.7 per cent of male bachelor degree graduates and 26.5 per cent of female bachelor degree graduates were engaged in some type of further study at the time of the 2008 AGS. At this point in time, graduates were more likely to be undertaking full-time study, with 18.1 per cent of male graduates and 20.0 per cent of female graduates so engaged.³ Three years later, the proportion of graduates in further study had increased slightly, with 30.2 per cent of male graduates and 32.1 per cent of female graduates so engaged at the time of the 2011 BGS; however graduates in further study three years after course completion were now more likely to be studying part time than those graduates in further study immediately after course completion.

³ These figures may not reconcile with those presented in Table 1 due to different calculation methods.

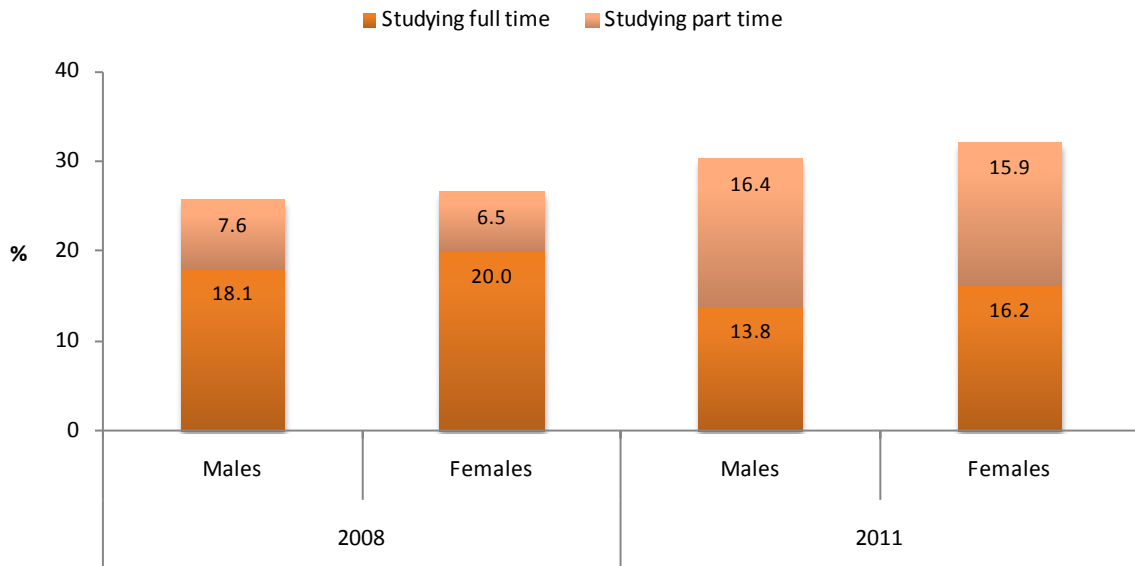


Figure 4. *Graduates in further study, bachelor graduates, by sex, 2008 and 2011 (%)*

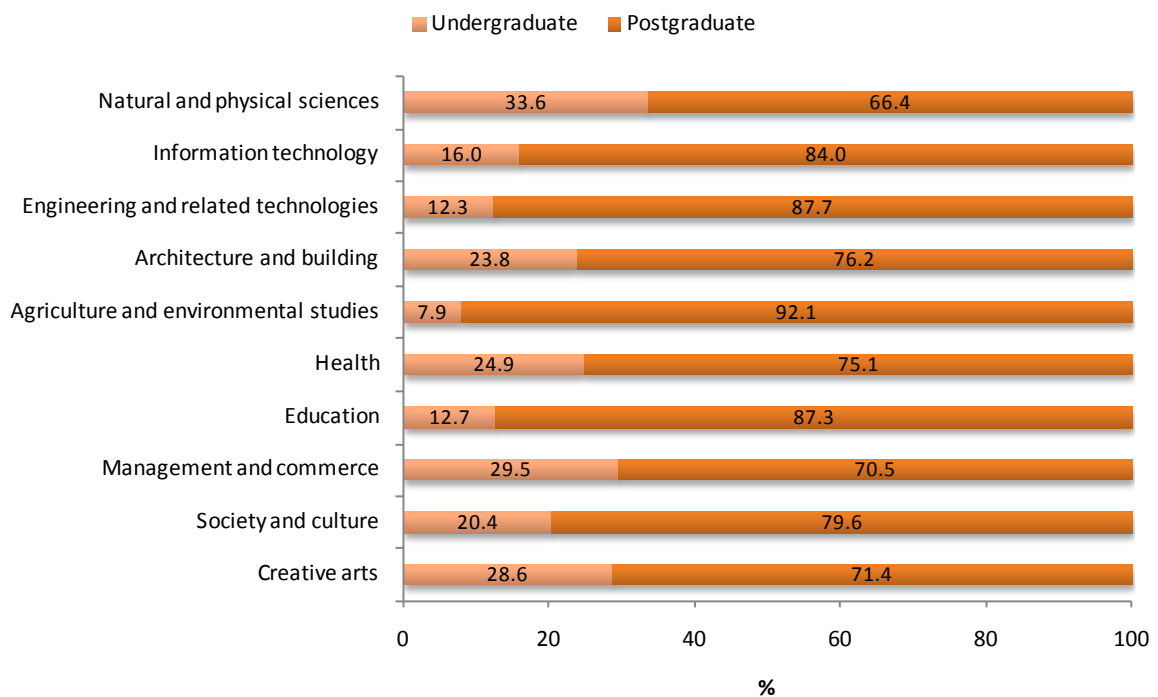


Figure 5. *Level of further study, bachelor graduates, by broad field of education, 2011 (%)*

Examining those bachelor degree graduates who were in further study three years after course completion in Figure 5, it can be seen that the majority of graduates from all fields of education were undertaking postgraduate study. Graduates originally from the natural and physical sciences field were the most likely to be studying for another undergraduate degree at the time of the 2011 BGS, followed by those originally from the fields of management and commerce, and creative arts.

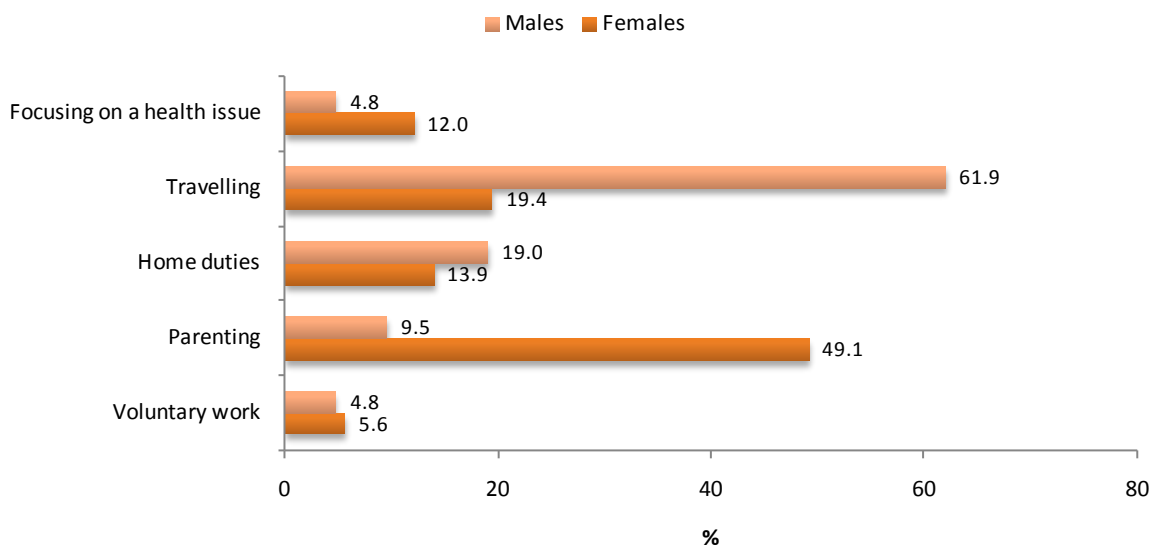


Figure 6. *Main activity of bachelor graduates not in the labour market nor in further study, by sex, 2011 (%)*

Graduates in other activities

Graduates who were not in employment nor in further study at the time of the 2011 BGS were asked to identify what they consider to be their main activity (see Figure 6). The most common activity for male graduates who were not in the workforce or studying was travel, while parenting was the most common activity for female graduates in this category. Voluntary work was a relatively uncommon activity for graduates of both sexes, as was focusing on a health issue for male graduates.

Graduate Salaries

An overview of the median annual salaries of bachelor degree graduates in full-time employment is presented in Table 10. When interpreting these figures, it is important to bear in mind that graduate salary levels may potentially be influenced by myriad economic forces, and do not necessarily reflect the quality of graduates in terms of their academic results or employability skills. Following standard AGS practice, salaries below \$15,000 and above the 99th percentile have been excluded as outliers.

At an overall level, full-time employed bachelor degree graduates earned a median salary of \$66,000 at the time of the 2011 BGS, representing an increase of 40.4 per cent in the three years following the completion of their studies (up from \$47,000 in 2008). By comparison, the level of consumer price inflation over this period was just 8.3 per cent.⁴ Graduates from the field of engineering and related technologies enjoyed the highest median salary for the period 2008 to 2011, while graduates from the information technology field were also high earners. Creative arts graduates consistently earned the lowest median salary out of any field of education. The fields of information technology, management and commerce, and health enjoyed the highest growth in their median salaries. Males either out-earned or had equivalent median salaries to females in all fields of education three years after course completion, with the largest gender pay gap observed for health graduates (\$14,500).

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011). *Consumer Price Index, Australia* (No. 6401.0). Canberra: Author.

Table 10. Median salary, bachelor graduates in full-time employment, by sex and broad field of education, 2008–11 (\$'000, n, %)

	2008		2009		2010		2011		Growth
	\$'000	n	\$'000	n	\$'000	n	\$'000	n	%
Males									
Natural and physical sciences	50.0	75	60.0	63	62.0	65	67.5	63	35.0
Information technology	51.5	130	63.5	103	68.5	113	75.0	115	45.6
Engineering and related technologies	55.0	212	65.0	170	70.0	180	80.0	184	45.5
Architecture and building	46.0	30	58.5	28	63.0	29	68.5	29	48.9
Agriculture and environmental studies	50.0	29	54.5	28	62.0	28	67.0	26	34.0
Health	50.0	121	65.0	107	70.0	102	79.5	101	59.0
Education	48.0	74	57.0	68	60.7	73	65.0	76	35.4
Management and commerce	50.0	294	58.0	257	65.0	268	75.0	274	50.0
Society and culture	48.0	204	58.0	175	62.2	179	70.0	193	45.8
Creative arts	45.0	42	49.0	45	55.0	46	59.1	50	31.3
Total	50.0	1,211	60.0	1,044	65.0	1,083	72.0	1,111	44.0
Females									
Natural and physical sciences	46.0	147	52.0	120	58.0	123	62.0	125	34.8
Information technology	50.0	23	59.0	21	67.5	21	75.0	23	50.0
Engineering and related technologies	55.0	55	60.5	50	69.1	49	72.7	49	32.2
Architecture and building	43.8	36	54.0	27	60.0	29	64.0	35	46.1
Agriculture and environmental studies	45.0	28	55.0	21	58.0	25	65.0	28	44.4
Health	45.0	498	55.0	416	60.0	397	65.0	396	44.4
Education	47.9	266	55.0	251	59.0	250	63.0	251	31.5
Management and commerce	45.5	362	54.0	320	60.0	323	68.0	332	49.5
Society and culture	45.7	505	55.0	461	60.0	462	65.0	479	42.2
Creative arts	38.5	146	46.0	111	50.0	118	54.0	138	40.3
Total	46.0	2,066	55.0	1,798	60.0	1,797	64.5	1,856	40.2
Total									
Natural and physical sciences	47.0	222	55.0	183	59.3	188	65.0	188	38.3
Information technology	50.0	153	60.0	124	68.5	134	75.0	138	50.0
Engineering and related technologies	55.0	267	64.0	220	70.0	229	76.0	233	38.2
Architecture and building	45.0	66	55.0	55	60.0	58	65.0	64	44.4
Agriculture and environmental studies	45.0	57	55.0	49	59.0	53	65.0	54	44.4
Health	45.3	619	57.0	523	62.0	499	67.0	497	47.9
Education	48.0	340	55.0	319	59.0	323	63.0	327	31.3
Management and commerce	47.0	656	55.0	577	62.0	591	70.0	606	48.9
Society and culture	46.2	709	55.0	636	60.0	641	66.0	672	42.9
Creative arts	40.0	188	46.6	156	52.5	164	55.0	188	37.5
Total	47.0	3,277	55.0	2,842	60.0	2,880	66.0	2,967	40.4

Course Review

As part of the 2011 BGS, bachelor degree graduates were invited to provide an indication of their likelihood of studying the same degree at the same institution if they were given the (hypothetical) opportunity to choose whether or not to repeat the course of study that led to the qualification they completed in 2007. The five-point response format consisted of categories labelled *very unlikely*, *unlikely*, *neither unlikely or likely*, *likely* and *very likely*. As shown in Figure 7, graduates who were unemployed and seeking full-time employment at the time of the survey were the least likely to want to repeat the same degree at their graduating institution, with only 41.3 per cent of graduates indicating that they were either *likely* or *very likely* to do so given the opportunity. Graduates who were working part-time whilst seeking full-time employment were similarly unlikely to want to repeat the same degree. Graduates who were in further full-time study at the time of the 2011 BGS were the most likely to repeat the same degree, followed by graduates in full-time employment. It

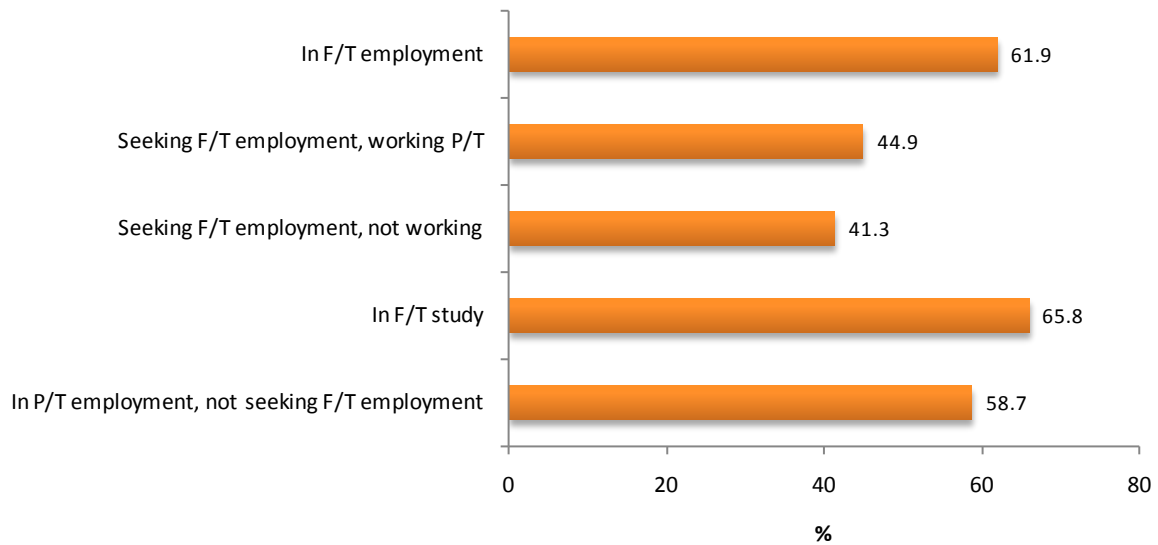


Figure 7. Likelihood of bachelor graduates studying the same degree at the same institution again if given the choice, likely/very likely, by labour market status, 2011 (%)

appears that some of this reluctance to want to repeat the same course of study is related to poorer labour market outcomes, and does not necessarily reflect the quality of the course itself.

Postgraduate Destinations

Up to this point, this report has focused largely on the destinations and salaries of domestic bachelor degree graduates. This section provides a brief overview of the destinations and salaries of domestic postgraduates, who constitute approximately 35 per cent of responses to the 2011 BGS.

From Table 11, it can be seen that 91.9 per cent of male postgraduates and 78.5 per cent of female postgraduates indicated that they were available for full-time employment at the time of the 2008 AGS. In contrast to bachelor degree graduates, who were more likely to be available for full-time employment three years after course completion (see Table 1), postgraduates were slightly less likely to be available for the full-time labour force in 2011. This appears to be primarily due to an increase in the proportion of female postgraduates who were in part-time or casual employment and not seeking full-time work, or were unavailable for full-time study or any employment.

Of the postgraduates who were available for full-time employment, a large proportion had already secured full-time employment by the time of the 2008 AGS. As shown in Table 12, 91.4 per cent of male postgraduates and 90.0 per cent of female postgraduates were in full-time employment in 2008, which had increased to 94.3 per cent for both sexes by 2011. (Employment rates peaked for male postgraduates in 2010.) Unemployment rates tended to be lower for postgraduates than for bachelor degree graduates. It should be noted that postgraduates are typically older than bachelor degree graduates and therefore tend to have more extensive work experience. This, along with their higher level of education, may contribute to their generally superior labour market outcomes.

Table 11. Main activity of postgraduates, by sex, 2008–11 (% , n)

	Available for full-time employment (Table 12)	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 n
Males							
2008	91.9	2.9	3.6	0.0	1.7	100	1,313
2009	92.7	1.8	3.6	0.2	1.7	100	1,158
2010	92.7	1.8	3.8	0.1	1.6	100	1,196
2011	92.4	2.1	3.7	0.0	1.8	100	1,325
Females							
2008	78.5	3.8	14.0	0.0	3.7	100	1,966
2009	75.0	3.9	15.3	0.7	5.2	100	1,835
2010	74.1	3.3	16.6	0.7	5.3	100	1,875
2011	73.4	3.3	17.4	0.6	5.4	100	1,997
Total							
2008	83.9	3.4	9.8	0.0	2.9	100	3,279
2009	81.9	3.1	10.8	0.5	3.8	100	2,993
2010	81.3	2.7	11.6	0.5	3.8	100	3,071
2011	81.0	2.8	11.9	0.3	4.0	100	3,322

Table 12. Postgraduates available for full-time employment, by sex and employment status, 2008–11 (% , n)

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, working part time or casual	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Total seeking full-time employment	TOTAL	TOTAL n
Males						
2008	91.4	3.6	5.0	8.6	100	1,206
2009	94.2	2.8	3.0	5.8	100	1,073
2010	94.8	2.2	3.1	5.3	100	1,109
2011	94.3	2.2	3.5	5.7	100	1,224
Females						
2008	90.0	6.2	3.8	10.0	100	1,544
2009	93.3	4.0	2.7	6.7	100	1,377
2010	93.9	4.0	2.2	6.2	100	1,389
2011	94.3	3.4	2.3	5.7	100	1,466
Total						
2008	90.6	5.1	4.3	9.4	100	2,750
2009	93.7	3.5	2.8	6.3	100	2,450
2010	94.3	3.2	2.6	5.8	100	2,498
2011	94.3	2.9	2.8	5.7	100	2,690

Full-time employed postgraduates were instructed to rate the importance of the qualification they completed in 2007 to their main paid job using the same five-point response format discussed in relation to Figure 1. Interestingly, postgraduates were less likely than bachelor degree graduates to feel that their qualification was important to their main paid job, notably so with regard to certain fields of education (see Figure 8). Postgraduates from the engineering and related technologies field were less likely than their bachelor degree counterparts to consider their qualification important to their job, both immediately after course completion (25.9 percentage points) and three years later (24.8 percentage points).⁵ Postgraduates from the field of architecture and building were much less

⁵ These figures are the difference in the relative proportions of bachelor degree graduates and postgraduates who considered their qualification important to their main paid job.

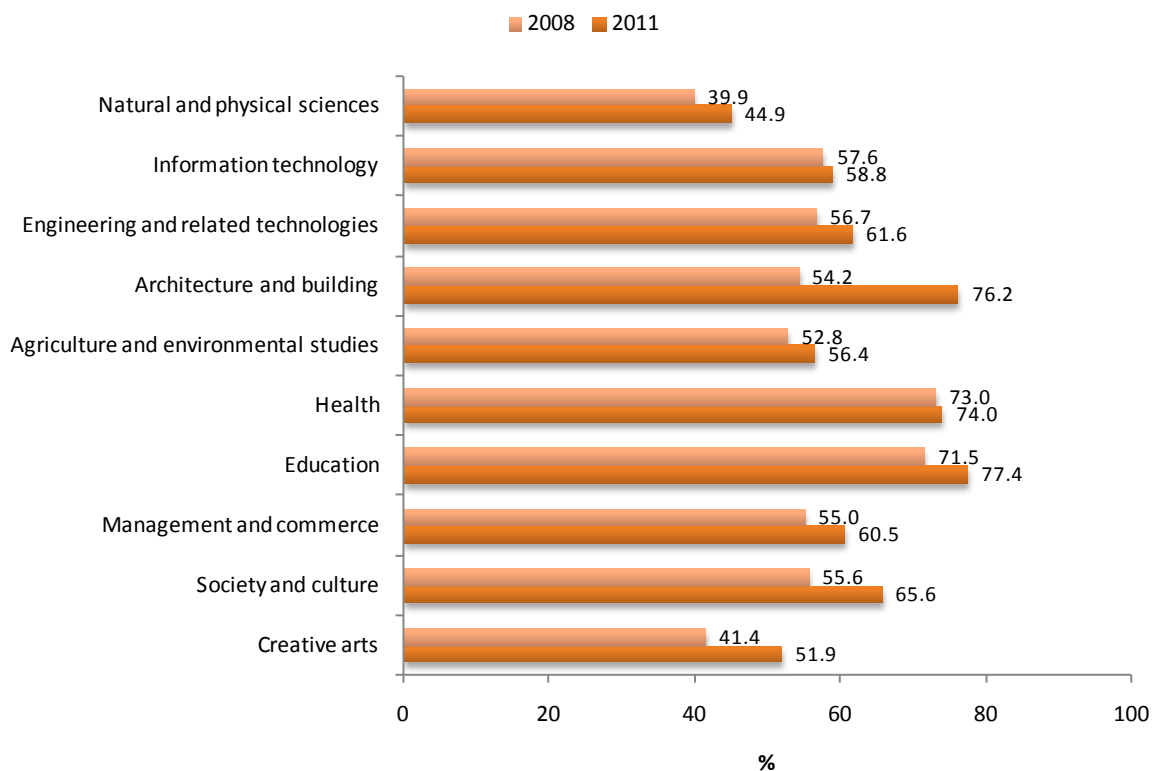


Figure 8. Qualification important to main paid job, postgraduates in full-time employment, by broad field of education, 2008 and 2011 (%)

likely to consider their qualification important than bachelor degree graduates from the same field immediately after course completion (34.1 percentage points); however this gap did narrow over the next three years. While postgraduates do enjoy high employment rates, these findings suggest that many do not believe themselves to be in jobs that fully utilise their specialised knowledge and skills. (The fact that 83.3 per cent of postgraduates were not seeking alternative work at the time of the 2011 survey suggests that this situation is not necessarily seen as a negative one.) Postgraduates from the fields of education and health were among the most likely to be in relevant jobs.

Full-time employed postgraduates earned a median salary of \$85,000 at the time of the 2011 BGS, representing an increase of 29.2 per cent in the three years following course completion (*cf.* 40.4 per cent for bachelor degree graduates), at which point their median salary was \$65,800 (see Table 13). Postgraduates from the field of management and commerce consistently enjoyed the highest median salary over this period, increasing from \$80,000 in 2008 to \$104,500 in 2011. Postgraduates from the field of engineering and related technologies also enjoyed consistently high earnings, while those from the creative arts field tended to earn the lowest median salary. The creative arts field did, however, enjoy relatively strong salary growth of 37.6 per cent, second only to growth of 45.0 per cent recorded for the field of agriculture and environmental studies. Engineering and related technologies experienced the lowest growth in median salary over the period from 2008 to 2011 (21.8 per cent). The highest median salary earned by postgraduates of either sex was for males from the field of management and commerce (\$120,000). This was also the field of study with the widest gender pay gap in 2011 (\$28,000 or 30.4 per cent favouring males).

Table 13. Median salary, postgraduates in full-time employment, by sex and broad field of education, 2008–11 (\$'000, n, %)

	2008		2009		2010		2011		Growth
	\$'000	n	\$'000	n	\$'000	n	\$'000	n	%
Males									
Natural and physical sciences	70.0	60	83.0	45	79.0	49	88.0	50	25.7
Information technology	73.0	64	82.5	48	90.0	53	95.4	52	30.7
Engineering and related technologies	83.0	79	88.0	64	90.0	68	100.0	69	20.5
Architecture and building	61.0	14	72.0	10	68.0	11	75.0	11	23.0
Agriculture and environmental studies	67.7	13	80.0	11	78.0	11	95.5	12	41.1
Health	76.3	81	88.5	71	91.5	73	95.5	71	25.2
Education	63.0	114	75.0	104	78.0	109	80.0	107	27.0
Management and commerce	90.0	328	100.0	295	110.0	310	120.0	310	33.3
Society and culture	70.0	170	77.0	143	80.0	146	85.5	147	22.1
Creative arts	61.9	18	74.5	17	90.0	17	90.0	19	45.4
Total	75.0	941	85.0	808	90.0	847	95.2	848	26.9
Females									
Natural and physical sciences	58.5	64	67.0	56	72.0	53	75.5	58	29.1
Information technology	60.0	21	75.0	21	78.3	21	84.5	21	40.8
Engineering and related technologies	62.5	16	71.5	12	75.0	11	80.5	12	28.8
Architecture and building	58.5	12	75.0	12	68.0	10	†	†	‡
Agriculture and environmental studies	60.0	19	65.0	18	64.5	16	71.0	16	18.3
Health	60.0	211	70.0	187	75.0	175	80.0	170	33.3
Education	57.4	276	70.0	244	75.0	242	79.0	238	37.6
Management and commerce	73.8	250	80.0	194	85.0	202	92.0	197	24.7
Society and culture	60.0	290	70.0	252	75.0	260	79.2	260	32.0
Creative arts	52.9	46	60.0	39	66.5	42	65.5	45	23.8
Total	60.0	1,205	70.0	1,035	75.0	1,032	80.0	1,025	33.3
Total									
Natural and physical sciences	62.8	124	72.0	101	75.0	102	80.0	108	27.4
Information technology	70.0	85	76.0	69	83.5	74	90.0	73	28.6
Engineering and related technologies	78.0	95	86.0	76	90.0	79	95.0	81	21.8
Architecture and building	59.0	26	75.0	22	68.0	21	75.0	19	27.1
Agriculture and environmental studies	60.0	32	70.0	29	70.0	27	87.0	28	45.0
Health	63.3	292	75.0	258	79.5	248	80.0	241	26.4
Education	60.0	390	70.0	348	76.0	351	79.8	345	33.0
Management and commerce	80.0	578	91.5	489	99.2	512	104.5	507	30.6
Society and culture	62.0	460	73.0	395	77.1	406	80.0	407	29.0
Creative arts	54.5	64	69.0	56	70.0	59	75.0	64	37.6
Total	65.8	2,146	76.0	1,843	80.0	1,879	85.0	1,873	29.2

† Salaries based on fewer than 10 cases are not shown. ‡ Unable to be calculated.

Further Research

This summary report has only scratched the surface of graduate outcomes in the early years after course completion. The BGS gathers a wealth of data concerning the outcomes and experiences of recent higher education graduates, much of which cannot be reported here due to report length and resource constraints. To address this, GCA is planning to release a series of white papers that delve into aspects of the graduate experience in greater detail than is possible here. Any readers who wish to propose a topic for further investigation are invited to contact GCA at the address listed on page i of this report. Feedback on the content of this report is also encouraged.

The report of the 2012 Beyond Graduation Survey will be published in early 2013.

Table A1. Higher education institutions that participated in the 2011 BGS

Australian Catholic University
Australian College of Theology
Australian National University
Avondale College
Bond University
Central Queensland University
Charles Darwin University
Charles Sturt University
Deakin University
Edith Cowan University
Flinders University of South Australia
Griffith University
James Cook University
La Trobe University
Macquarie University
Melbourne College of Divinity
Monash University
Murdoch University
RMIT
Southern Cross University
Swinburne University of Technology
University of Ballarat
University of Melbourne
University of New South Wales
University of Newcastle
University of Notre Dame, Australia
University of Queensland
University of South Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Sydney
University of Tasmania
University of Technology, Sydney
University of the Sunshine Coast
Victoria University

Table A2. 2011 BGS respondent characteristics (% , n)

	Bachelor degree		Postgraduate	
	%	n	%	n
Broad field of education[†]				
Natural and physical sciences	11.5	733	5.9	200
Information technology	4.0	256	3.8	128
Engineering and related technologies	5.8	371	3.9	132
Architecture and building	1.9	124	1.0	35
Agriculture and environmental studies	2.0	127	1.6	56
Health	14.7	937	14.2	484
Education	8.9	566	18.5	632
Management and commerce	16.1	1,027	23.2	792
Society and culture	26.1	1,661	23.2	790
Creative arts	8.8	559	4.7	161
Means of financing study[†]				
HECS paid upfront	21.1	1,323	10.0	336
HECS deferred some or all	72.5	4,550	26.2	880
International fee-paying student	1.7	109	3.9	131
Australian fee-paying student	4.6	288	49.0	1,649
APA or RTS research student	0.1	7	11.0	369
Main attendance type[†]				
Mainly full time	84.0	5,286	36.1	1,226
Mainly part time	16.0	1,008	63.9	2,171
Main attendance mode[†]				
Internal (on campus)	83.4	5,255	54.6	1,858
External (off campus)	7.2	454	31.9	1,086
Mixed mode (internal and external)	9.4	595	13.5	461
Sex[‡]				
Male	33.9	2,158	39.2	1,341
Female	66.0	4,198	60.7	2,073
Unknown	0.1	9	0.1	3
Age group[‡]				
Under 25	65.5	4,166	10.6	362
25 and over	34.5	2,191	89.4	3,049
Main language spoken at home[‡]				
English	88.2	5,549	86.2	2,934
Other	11.8	740	13.8	469
Disability identification[‡]				
Yes	2.6	166	2.6	90
No	97.4	6,109	97.4	3,308
Paid work during final year of study[†]				
Yes	83.1	5,115	87.5	2,932
No	16.9	1,041	12.5	420

[†] These characteristics relate to the course of study completed in 2007. [‡] At the time of the 2008 AGS.



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