

Media Release: New Postgraduate Employment

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Embargoed until 11:30 pm, Tuesday 18 September, 2012

New Postgraduates: Standing Out from the Crowd

Postgraduate studies continue to play an important role in the education and training of Australians. Between 1999 and 2010, the number of people completing postgraduate awards more than doubled. In 2011, more than a quarter of all enrolled higher education students were studying at postgraduate level.

The latest Australian Graduate Survey (AGS), conducted annually by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA), revealed that around 85 per cent of recent postgraduates were in full-time employment, down from around 90 per cent in 2008. This employment rate was also the lowest recorded for the past decade (*see Table E1a in the related spreadsheet*).

While postgraduates were more likely to have been in full-time employment than bachelor degree graduates, direct comparisons between the two groups from the same survey cannot be made without taking into account the fact that postgraduates are older and have more work experience. For postgraduates in full-time employment, 22.5 per cent were in their first full-time job, whereas for bachelors, this figure was almost 60 per cent (*see Table 4 in report*).

Similarly, the median reported salary for all postgraduates was \$73,000 (\$80,000 for males and \$68,000 for females) while for bachelor degree graduates it was \$52,000 (\$55,000 for males and \$50,000 for females) (*see Table 9 in the report*).

Report author, Bruce Guthrie, said "Postgraduate study meets a variety of student needs, from updating skills and re-skilling to adding vocational qualifications to a generalist degree in order to stand out from an increasing number of bachelor degree graduates in the Australian workforce."

In the wider Australian workforce, Australian Bureau of Statistics data gathered at around the same time as the AGS was conducted suggest that postgraduates had an unemployment rate of between 2.6 and 2.7 per cent, compared with 3.0 per cent for bachelor degree graduates, 7.1 per cent for those with no post-secondary qualifications and 5.1 per cent for the entire workforce.

Further information and comment

For further information please refer to the attached Media Backgrounder. Copies of the recently released Australian Graduate Survey report, *Postgraduate Destinations 2011*, can be downloaded from the GCA website: <http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/mediacentre/newsandmediareleases/>

Media Backgrounder: New Postgraduate Employment

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New Postgraduates: Standing Out from the Crowd

A new report examining the employment and study outcomes of recent postgraduates was released by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) today. The report, *Postgraduate Destinations 2011*, is based on the annual Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) of new graduates from Australian institutions of higher education. Graduates are surveyed approximately four months after they complete their course of study. In 2011, responses from more than 134,000 higher education graduates, including more than 52,000 postgraduates, were collected and analysed for this report.

This Media Backgrounder provides a summary of some of the key findings. Some of the Tables referenced below are only found in the supplementary tables and figures distributed in a spreadsheet with the report.

At the time of the 2011 AGS:

- More than three-quarters of postgraduates surveyed (76.0 per cent) were available for full-time employment (this means either in, or seeking, a full-time position), which is relatively unchanged from 75.6 per cent in 2010 (*see Table E1*).
- The vast majority of those available for full-time employment were in a full-time position at the time of the survey (84.8 per cent). This is a notable fall of 1.5 percentage points from 86.3 per cent in 2010 and by 4.6 percentage points since 2002 (*see Table E1a*).
- In 2011, 6.6 per cent of postgraduates available for full-time employment were without work and still seeking a full-time position at the time of the survey (5.9 per cent in 2010). A further 8.6 per cent were in part-time work while seeking a full-time position (7.8 per cent in 2010) (*see Table E1a*).

Postgraduate Salaries

- The overall median salary for all postgraduates was \$73,000, an increase of \$3,000 from the 2010 figure of \$70,000 (*see Table 9*). The median salary for:
 - postgraduate diploma/certificate graduates was \$70,000 (up \$5,000 from 2010)
 - coursework masters graduates was \$76,000 (up \$1,000 from 2010)
 - research masters/PhD graduates was \$75,000 (up \$5,000 from 2010)
 - bachelor degree graduates was \$52,000 (up \$2,000 from 2010).
- The median annual salary for postgraduates in their first full-time employment (*see Table 10*) was:
 - \$58,000 for postgraduate diploma/certificate graduates
 - \$57,000 for coursework masters graduates
 - \$68,000 for research masters/PhD graduates.

- Across the three postgraduate award levels, males reported higher median annual salaries than females (see Table 9):
 - Male postgraduates at the postgraduate diploma/certificate level reported a median salary \$15,000 higher than female postgraduates (\$80,000 compared with \$65,000).
 - Male postgraduates at the coursework masters level reported a median salary \$15,000 higher than female postgraduates (\$85,000 compared with \$70,000).
 - Male postgraduates at the research masters/PhD level reported a median salary \$2,000 higher than female postgraduates (\$75,000 compared with \$73,000).

Across the three postgraduate award levels, there were notable differences in median salaries between postgraduates in their first full-time employment compared with all postgraduates at that level (see Table 10):

- Postgraduate diploma/certificate graduates in their first full-time employment earned a median salary \$12,000 less than other postgraduates at that award level (\$58,000 compared with \$70,000).
- Coursework masters graduates in their first full-time employment earned a median salary \$19,500 less than other postgraduates at that award level (\$57,000 compared with \$76,500).
- Research masters/PhD graduates in their first full-time employment earned a median salary \$7,000 less than other postgraduates at that award level (\$68,000 compared with \$75,000).

Postgraduate Employment Outcomes

- Of the postgraduates available for full-time employment in 2011, 84.8 per cent were in full-time employment at the time of the AGS, approximately four months after completing their studies. This represents a 1.5 percentage point fall from 86.3 per cent in 2010 (see Table E1a).
 - Of postgraduate diploma/certificate graduates available for full-time employment, 86.8 per cent had secured a full-time position by the time of the AGS (down from 88.3 per cent in 2010 – see Table E2a).
 - Of coursework masters graduates available for full-time employment, 83.6 per cent had found full-time employment by the time of the AGS (down from 84.7 per cent in 2010 – see Table E3a).
 - Of research masters/PhD graduates available for full-time employment, 83.3 per cent had secured full-time employment by the time of the AGS (84.9 per cent in 2010 – see Table E4a).

Further information and comment

Copies of the recently released Australian Graduate Survey report, *Postgraduate Destinations 2011*, can be downloaded from the GCA website:

<http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/mediacentre/newsandmediareleases/>