

2013 Graduate Outlook Survey

A Summary Report for Construction, Mining and Engineering employers

Currently in its ninth year, the GOS has become a valuable source of information on graduate recruitment trends across the sector. This report investigates current graduate recruitment practices according to the participating employers belonging to the Construction, Mining and Engineering industries. Important content covered in this summary report includes:

- ❖ Graduate intake figures in 2013;
- ❖ Key issues affecting graduate recruitment;
- ❖ Recruitment selection criteria (most desirable);
- ❖ The latest graduate program promotion methods; and
- ❖ Factors influencing graduate attrition and retention.

Of the 500 graduate employers who participated in the 2013 Graduate Outlook Survey (GOS), 91 of them were from Construction, Mining and Engineering industries.

What's happening in graduate recruitment?

Overall, 84 per cent of employers from Construction, Mining and Engineering industries indicated that they employed graduates in 2013. This figure decreased by 8.5 percentage points when compared with last year's overall graduate intake, which was recorded at 92.5 per cent.

Of Construction, Mining and Engineering employers in 2013 (see Figure 1):

- ❖ 16 per cent did not recruit any graduates at all;
- ❖ 57 per cent recruited between 1 and 20 graduates;
- ❖ 27 per cent recruited more than 20 graduates.

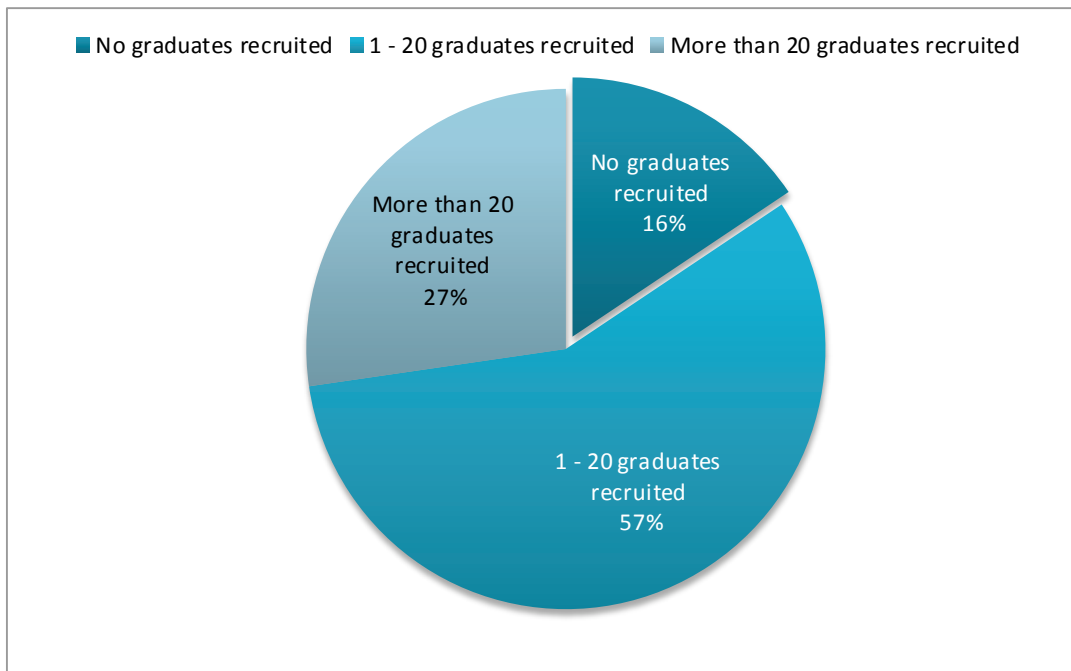


Figure 1: Graduate intake for C/M/E¹, 2013

Key issues affecting graduate recruitment

We asked Construction, Mining and Engineering employers to identify the key issues which affect the total number of graduates they recruit in a given year. Table 1 presents these key issues, ranked according to the top six issues for Construction, Mining and Engineering employers, and benchmarked against all industry groups.

The top three key issues that currently affect the total number of graduates recruited each year, according to Construction, Mining and Engineering employers were:

1. Economic conditions
2. Budgetary constraints
3. Quality, experience and skill of graduate

Table 1: Key issues currently affecting total number of graduates recruited, 2013 (Rank)

Key issues that currently affect the total number of graduates recruited each year	2013	ALL
Economic Conditions	1	1
Budgetary Constraints	2	2
Quality, experience and skill of graduate	3	3
Ability to provide internal support (mentoring capacity/ongoing employment)	4	4
Staff Turnover	5	5
Headcount	6	6

¹ Construction, Mining and Engineering

How do you select graduates?

Construction, Mining and Engineering employers were asked to rate which three selection criteria (aside from relevant qualifications) they considered to be *most* important when evaluating applicants. These are presented in Table 2, ranked from most (1) to least (10) nominated and benchmarked against all industry groups.

The top three most important selection criteria for Construction, Mining and Engineering employers in 2013 were:

1. Interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral)
2. Passion/ Knowledge of industry/ Drive/ Commitment/ Attitude
3. Work experience

Of more importance to Construction, Mining and Engineering employers was a graduate candidate's 'work experience,' ranked at third compared with an overall ranking of fifth, according to all industries. In line with all industry groups, the two least nominated selection criterions were 'activities' and 'leadership skills.'

Table 2: Most important selection criteria when recruiting graduates, 2013 (Rank)

Selection Criteria	2013	All
Interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral)	1	1
Passion/Knowledge of industry (etc.)	2	2
Work experience	3	5
Critical reasoning and analytical skills (etc.)	4	3
Calibre of academic results	5	4
Teamwork skills	6	8
Cultural alignment / Values fit	7	6
Emotional intelligence	8	7
Activities	9	9
Leadership skills	10	10

Popular methods to promote your graduate program

When Construction, Mining and Engineering employers were asked about the methods used to promote their 2013 graduate program (see Figure 2), the vast majority of employers, indicated that they promoted their graduate program through:

1. Their organisation's website (90.3 per cent)
2. Employment websites (80.6 per cent)
3. University Careers fairs (61.3 per cent).

The use of traditional newspaper advertising was ranked quite low in comparison to other types of promotion methods used (9.7 per cent).

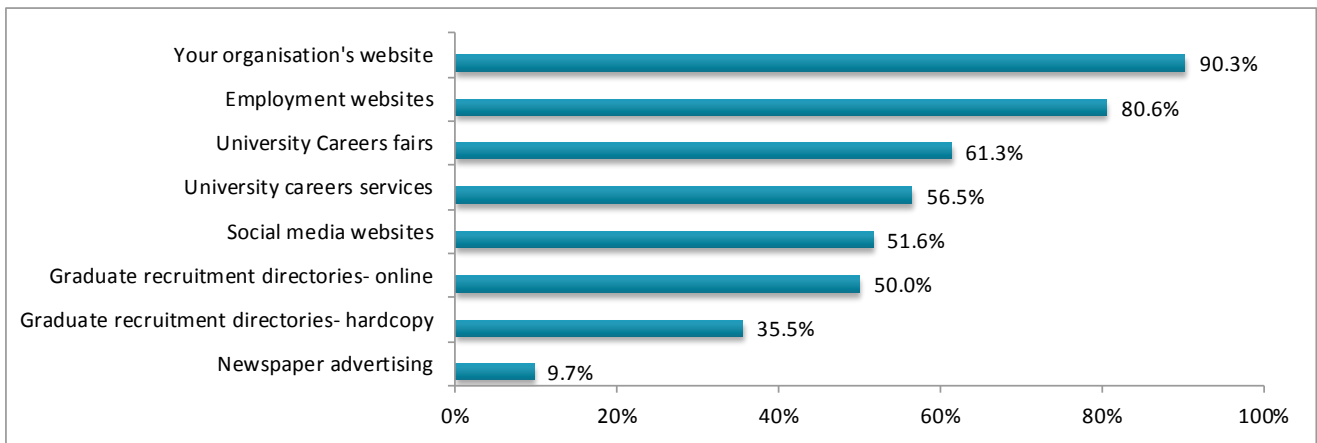


Figure 2: Methods used to promote graduate program, 2013

Why graduates leave an employer

Employers were asked to identify the factors that they believe contribute to a graduate's decision to change employers. Employers were presented with a list of ten key factors that may affect graduate attrition and were asked to rate each on a five-point importance scale (i.e. not at all important, not very important, somewhat important, quite important, very important). These are listed in Figure 3, in order of the proportion of employers who rated them as being either *quite* or *very* important.

The top factors to contribute to a graduate's decision to change employers in 2013, according to employers from Construction, Mining and Engineering industries were:

1. Relationship with direct manager/supervisor (84.6 per cent)
2. Seeking greater opportunities for advancement (81.5 per cent)
3. Organisational culture (80.0 per cent)

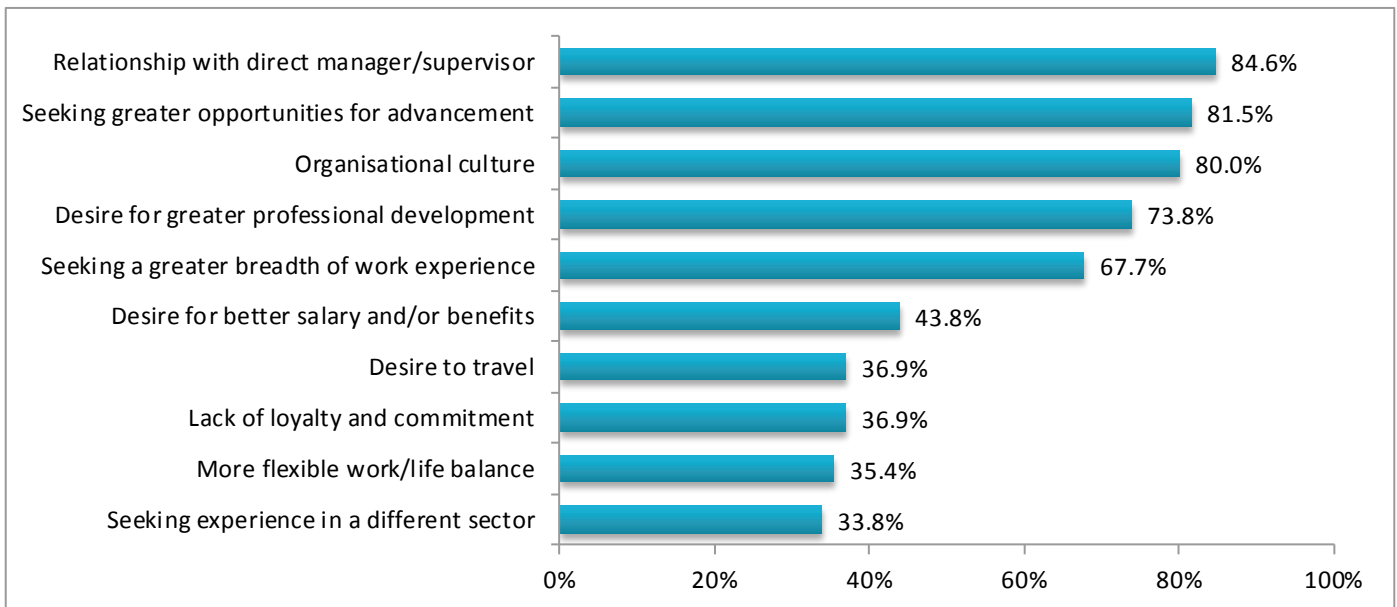


Figure 3: Quite/very important factors in graduate attrition, 2013

Those factors that were least important to graduate attrition with fewer than 50.0 per cent of Construction, Mining and Engineering employers indicating they were an issue were ‘desire for better salary and/or benefits,’ ‘desire to travel,’ ‘lack of loyalty and commitment,’ ‘more flexible work/life balance,’ and ‘seeking experience in a different sector.’

It is encouraging for employers that graduate attrition seems to be primarily influenced by factors largely within the control of the organisation, at least according to Construction, Mining and Engineering employers surveyed as part of the 2013 GOS.

How to retain your graduates

To better understand what employers are doing to encourage graduates to remain in their organisation, Construction, Mining and Engineering employers were asked to rate (based on their own experiences) the effectiveness of ten common graduate retention strategies on a five-point effectiveness scale (i.e. not at all effective, not very effective, somewhat effective, quite effective, very effective).

These strategies are presented in Figure 4, in terms of the proportion of employers from Construction, Mining and Engineering who considered them as being either *quite* or *very* effective.

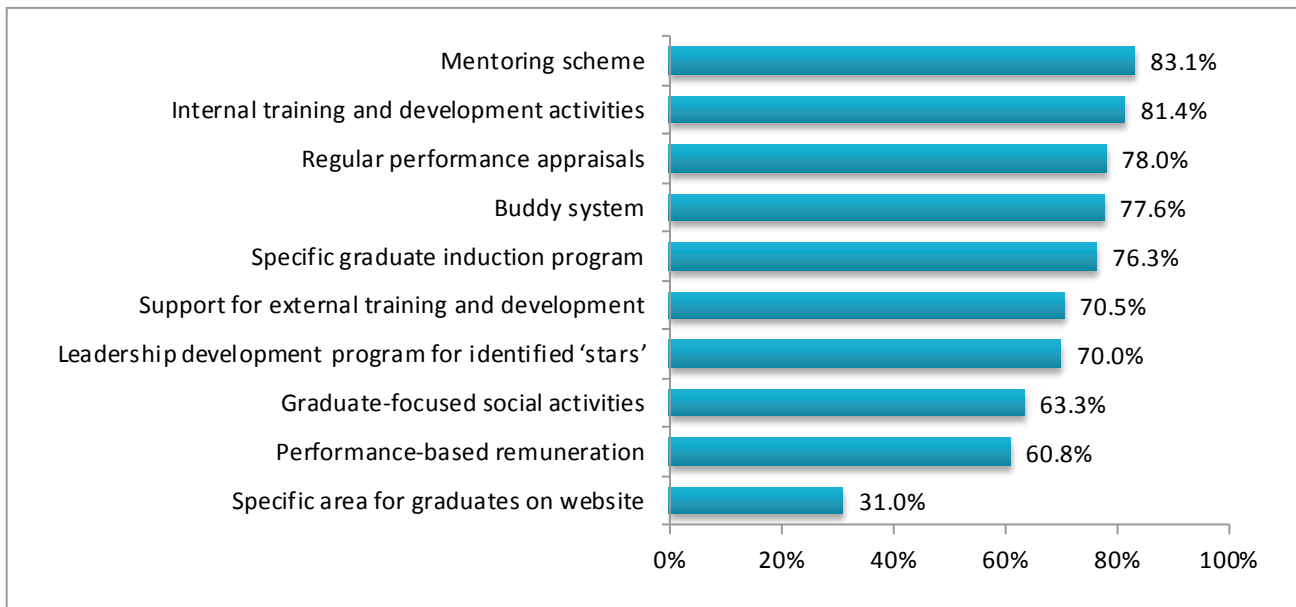


Figure 4: Quite/very effective graduate retention strategies, 2013 (Rank)

The three most effective retention strategies according to Construction, Mining and Engineering employers in 2013 were:

1. Mentoring scheme (83.1 per cent)
2. Internal training and development activities (81.4 per cent)
3. Regular performance appraisals (78.0 per cent)

Professional training and development opportunities can further a graduate's knowledge and skill-set. Employers using these as retention strategies may also view this as a way to foster a longer-term commitment from a graduate.

All industry groups ranked 'mentoring schemes' in second place whereas Construction, Mining and Engineering employers placed more emphasis on this retention strategy ranking it in first place.

Further Information

The Graduate Outlook Survey is one of a number of graduate outcomes surveys conducted annually by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA). For access to full report, [click here](#).

GCA produce a number of free reports on graduate outcomes data each year, as well as offer tailored reporting and data solutions on graduate recruitment practices and trends within Australasia.

GCA is a not-for-profit organisation whose research work is largely Federal Government funded. We also produce a number of careers resources for students and graduates, including *Graduate Opportunities*. For more information about the valuable work we do, please contact the GCA research team on (03) 9605 3700 or research@graduatecareers.com.au, or visit our website at www.graduatecareers.com.au.