

# 2013 Graduate Outlook Survey

## A Summary Report for Government, Defence and Health 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 Government, Defence and Health 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), 114 of them were from the Government, Defence and Health industries.

### What's happening in graduate recruitment?

Overall, 84 per cent of employers from Government, Defence and Health industries indicated that they employed graduates in 2013. This figure is relatively the same as 2012's intake, which was recorded at 85 per cent.

Of Government, Defence and Health employers in 2013 (see Figure 1):

- ❖ 16 per cent did not recruit any graduates at all;
- ❖ 54 per cent recruited between 1 and 20 graduates;
- ❖ Almost one third (30 per cent) recruited more than 20 graduates.

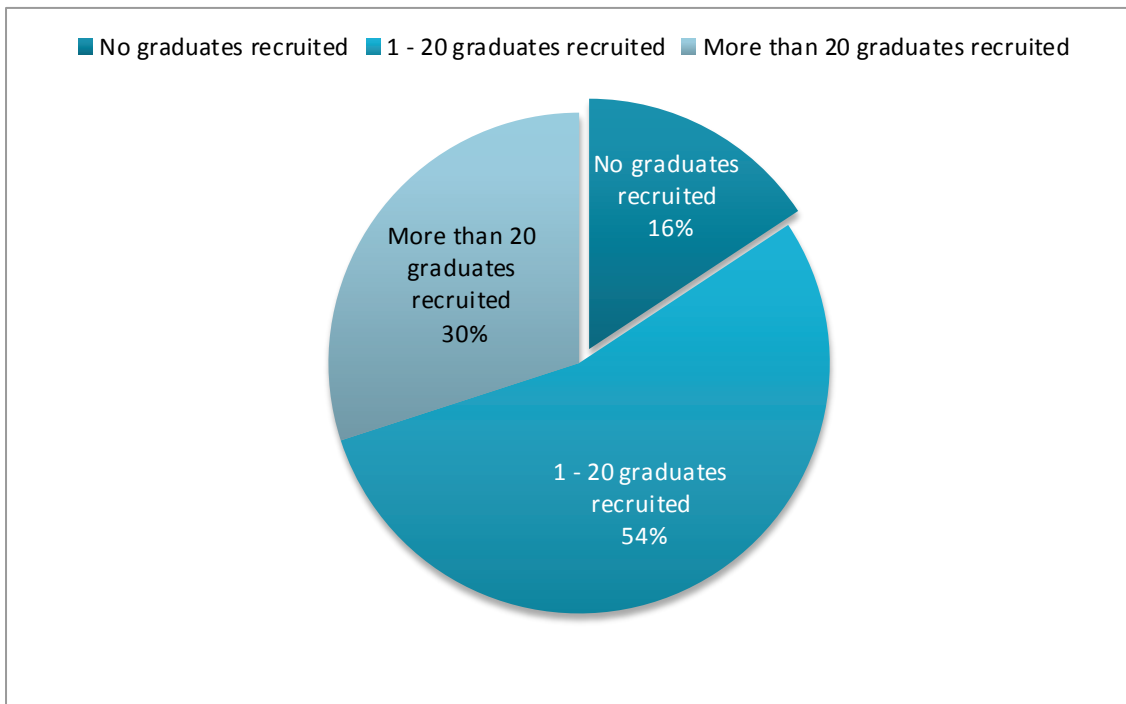


Figure 1: Graduate intake for G/D/H<sup>1</sup>, 2013

## Key issues affecting graduate recruitment

We asked Government, Defence and Health 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 Government, Defence and Health 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 Government, Defence and Health employers were:

1. Economic conditions
2. Budgetary constraints
3. Ability to provide internal support (mentoring capacity/ ongoing employment)

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
Ability to provide internal support (mentoring capacity/ongoing employment)	3	4
Quality, experience and skill of graduate	4	3
Staff Turnover	5	5
Headcount	6	6

<sup>1</sup> Government, Defence and Health

## How do you select graduates?

Government, Defence and Health 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 Government, Defence and Health employers in 2013 were:

1. Interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral)
2. Passion/ Knowledge of industry/ Drive/ Commitment/ Attitude
3. Critical reasoning & analytical skills / Problem solving / Lateral thinking / Technical skills

Of more importance to Government, Defence and Health employers was a graduate candidate's 'emotional intelligence,' ranked at fourth compared with an overall ranking of seventh, according to all industries. In line with all industry groups the two least nominated selection criteria 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
Critical reasoning and analytical skills (etc.)	3	3
Emotional intelligence	4	7
Calibre of academic results	5	4
Work experience	6	5
Teamwork skills	7	8
Cultural alignment / Values fit	8	6
Leadership skills	9	10
Activities	10	9

## Popular methods to promote your graduate program

When Government, Defence and Health 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 (78.8 per cent);
2. University Careers Services and employment websites (both 67.3 per cent);
3. University Careers Fairs (55.8 per cent).

The use of traditional hardcopy advertising was ranked quite low in comparison to other types of promotion methods used (Graduate recruitment directories – hardcopy, 23.1 per cent and newspaper advertising, 28.8 per cent).

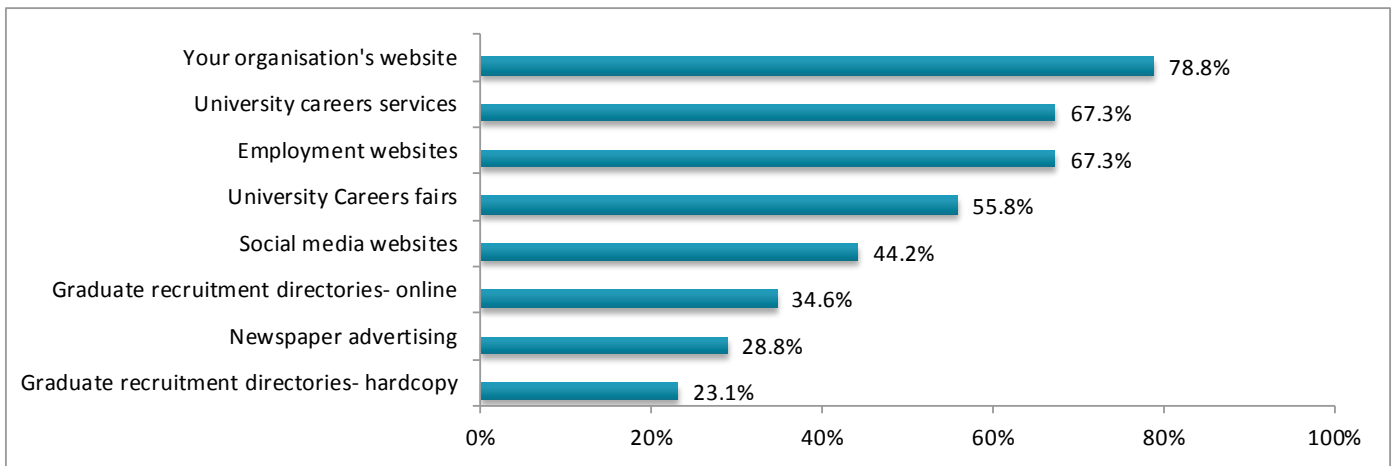


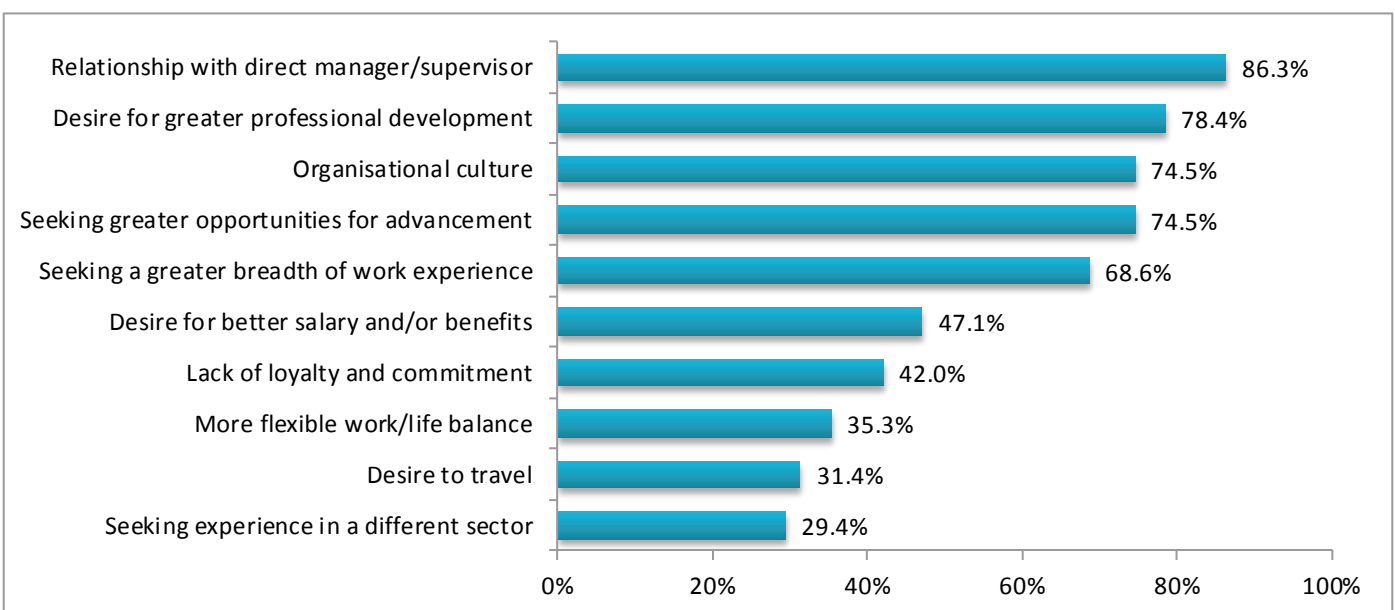
Figure 2: Methods used to promote graduate program, 2013

## 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 Government, Defence and Health industries were:

1. Relationship with direct manager/supervisor (86.3 per cent)
2. Desire for greater professional development (78.4 per cent)
3. Organisational culture, and seeking greater opportunities for advancement (both 74.5 per cent)



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

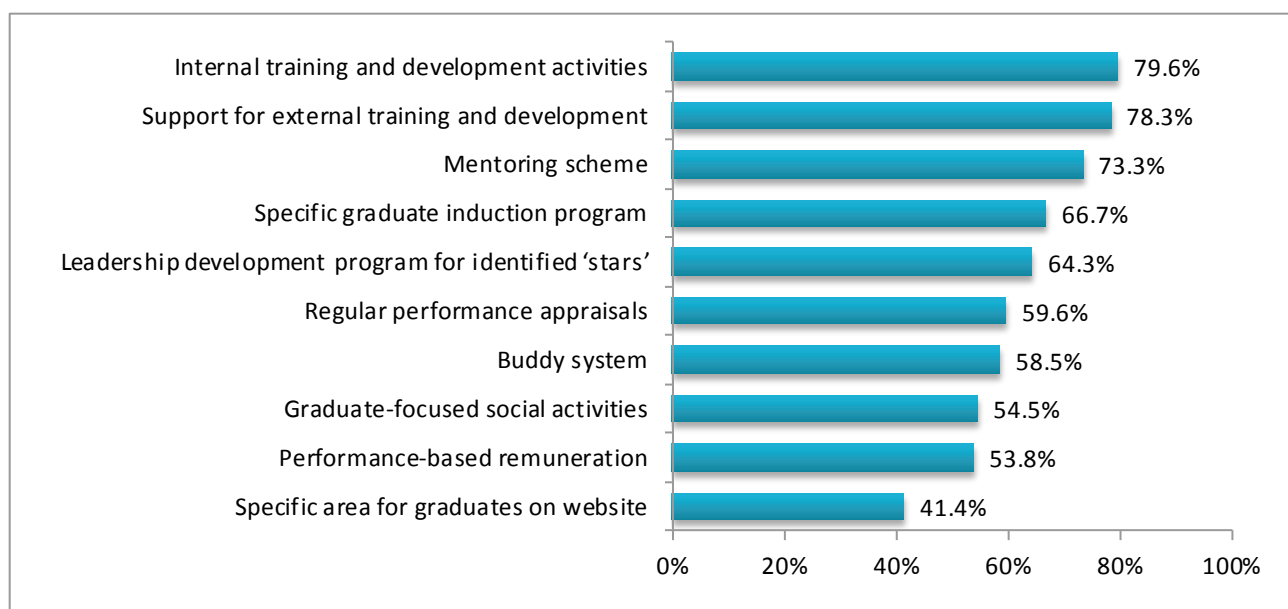
Those factors that were least important to graduate attrition with fewer than 50.0 per cent of Government, Defence and Health employers indicating they were an issue were ‘more flexible work/life balance,’ ‘desire to travel’ and ‘seeking experience in a different sector’ to name a few.

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 Government, Defence and Health 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, Government, Defence and Health 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 Government, Defence and Health 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 Government, Defence and Health employers in 2013 were:

1. Internal training and development activities (79.6 per cent)

2. Support for external training development (78.3 per cent)
3. Mentoring scheme (73.3 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 Government, Defence and Health employers placed less emphasis on this retention strategy ranking it in third 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](mailto:research@graduatecareers.com.au), or visit our website at [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au).