

2013 Graduate Outlook Survey

A Summary Report for Legal and Professional Services 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 Legal and Professional Services 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), 121 of them were from Legal and Professional Services.

What's happening in graduate recruitment?

Overall, 79 per cent of employers from Legal and Professional Services industries indicated that they employed graduates in 2013. This figure is unchanged from that which was measured in 2012.

Of Legal and Professional Services employers in 2013 (see Figure 1):

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

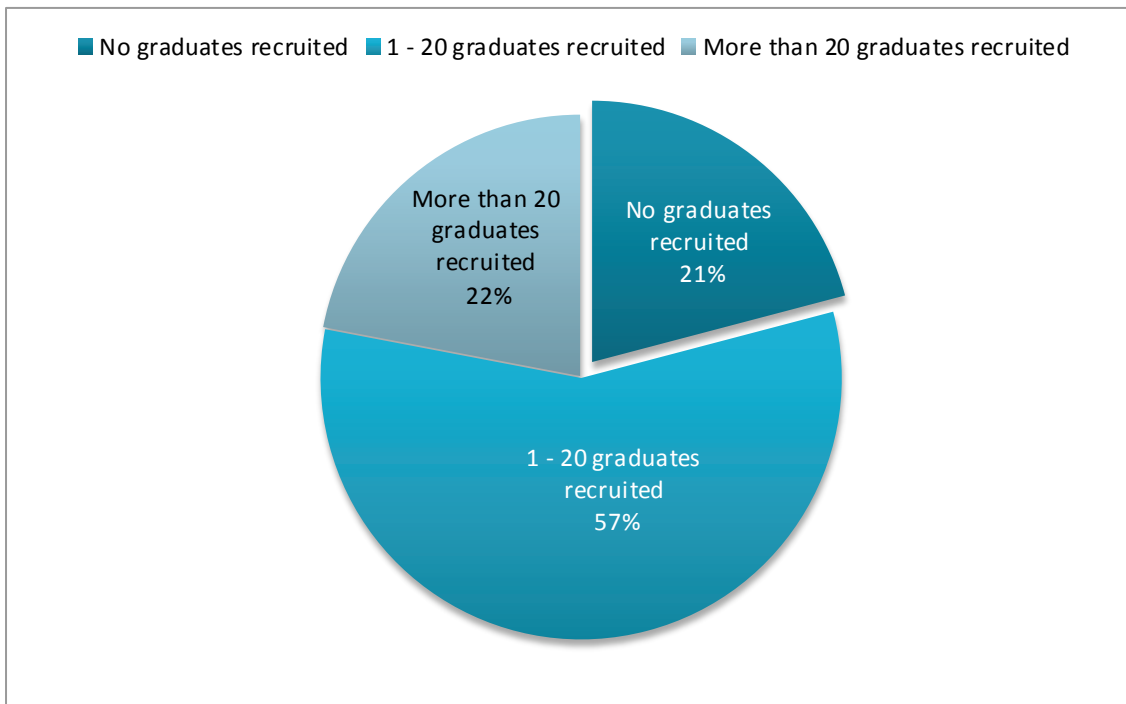


Figure 1: Graduate intake for L/PS¹, 2013

Key issues affecting graduate recruitment

We asked Legal and Professional Services 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 Legal and Professional Services 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 Legal and Professional Services employers were:

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

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
Quality, experience and skill of graduate	2	3
Budgetary Constraints	3	2
Ability to provide internal support (mentoring capacity/ongoing employment)	4	4
Staff Turnover	5	5
Headcount	6	6

¹ Legal and Professional Services

How do you select graduates?

Legal and Professional Services 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 Legal and Professional Services employers in 2013 were:

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

Of more importance to Legal and Professional Services employers was a graduate candidate's 'calibre of academic results,' ranked at third compared with an overall ranking of fourth, 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
Calibre of academic results	3	4
Critical reasoning and analytical skills (etc.)	4	3
Emotional intelligence	5	7
Work experience	6	5
Cultural alignment / Values fit	7	6
Teamwork skills	8	8
Activities	9	9
Leadership skills	10	10

Popular methods to promote your graduate program

When Legal and Professional Services 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 (82.8 per cent);
- 2 Employment websites and University Careers services (both 53.1 per cent);
- 3 University Careers Fairs (46.9 per cent).

The use of traditional newspaper advertising was ranked quite low in comparison to other types of promotion methods used (10.9 per cent).

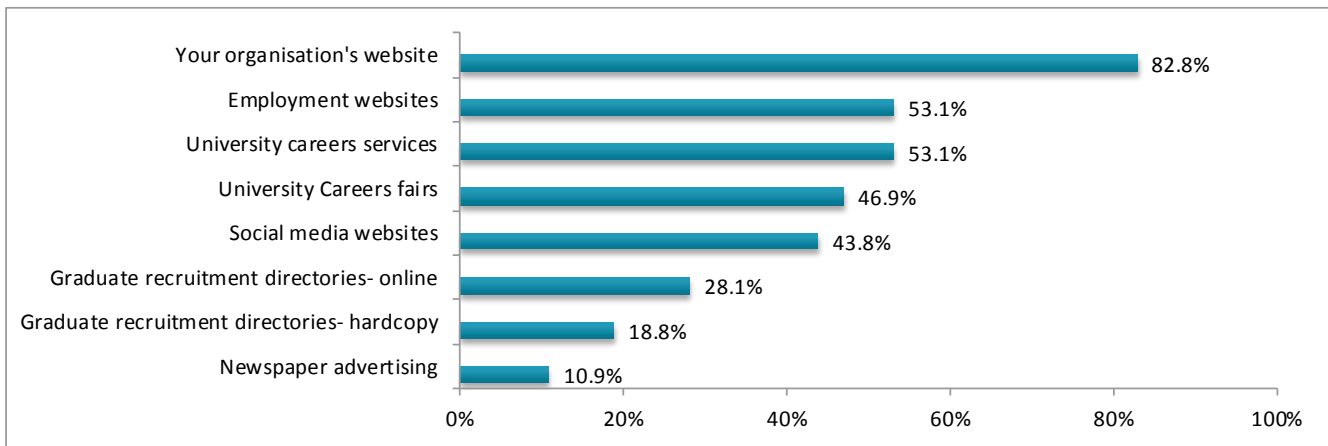


Figure 2: Methods used to promote graduate program, 2013

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 Legal and Professional Services industries were:

1. Relationship with direct manager/supervisor (88.9 per cent)
2. Desire for greater professional development (87.3 per cent)
3. Organisational culture (85.7 per cent)

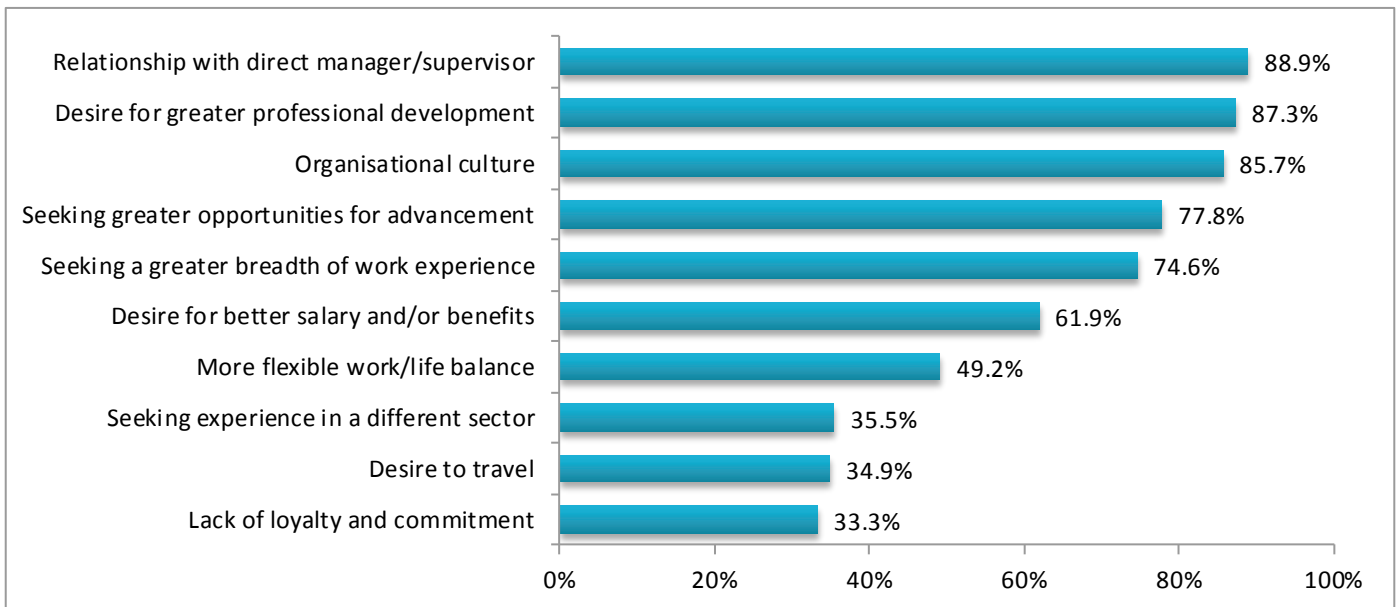


Figure 3: Quite/very important factors in graduate attrition, 2013

Those factors that were least important to graduate attrition with fewer than 50.0 per cent of Legal and Professional Services employers indicating they were an issue were ‘more flexible work/life balance,’ ‘seeking experience in a different sector,’ ‘desire to travel,’ and ‘lack of loyalty and commitment.’

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 Legal and Professional Services 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, Legal and Professional Services 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 Legal and Professional Services who considered them as being either *quite* or *very* effective.

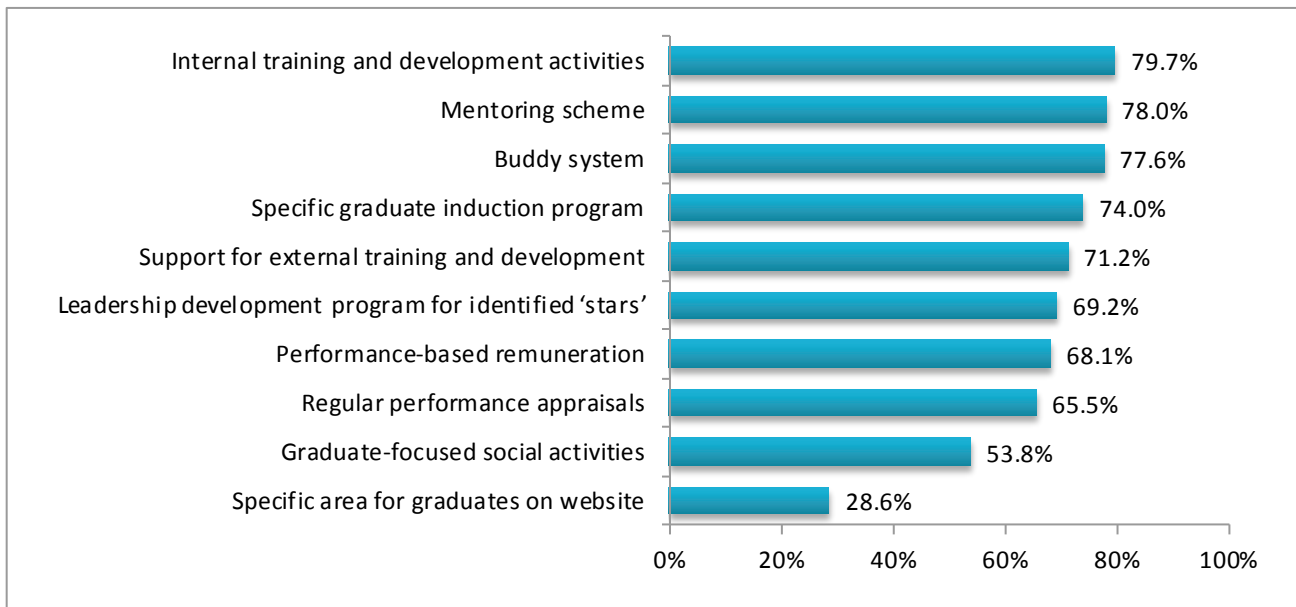


Figure 4: Quite/very effective graduate retention strategies, 2013 (Rank)

The three most effective retention strategies according to Legal and Professional Services employers in 2013 were:

1. Internal training and development activities (79.7 per cent)
2. Mentoring scheme (78.0 per cent)
3. Buddy system (77.6 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.

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.