2020 Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS)

National Report

November 2020

# Acknowledgements

The QILT survey program, including the 2020 Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Without the active support of Dr Andrew Taylor, Phil Aungles, Dr Sam Pietsch, Gabrielle Hodgson, Dr Michael Gao, Wayne Shippley and Ben McBrien this research would not be possible.

The Social Research Centre would especially like to thank the higher education institutions that contributed to the GOS in 2020.

We are also very grateful to the graduates who took the time to provide valuable feedback about their employment, further study and experience with their course.

The 2020 GOS was led by Graham Challice and the project team consisted of Shane Compton, Lisa Bolton, Natasha Vickers, James Morrison, Cynthia Kim, Alistair Wilcox, Paddy Tobias, Joe Feng, Dean Pennay, Shane Smith, Benjamin Desta, Bobby Hoque and Amida Cumming.

For more information on the conduct and results of the QILT survey program see the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) website. The QILT team can be contacted by email at qilt@srcentre.com.au.

Contents

[Acknowledgements 2](#_Toc50120338)

[1. Introduction 5](#_Toc50120339)

[2. Labour market outcomes 5](#_Toc50120340)

[2.1 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic 5](#_Toc50120341)

[2.2 Study Level 9](#_Toc50120342)

[2.3 Time series 10](#_Toc50120343)

[2.4 Study area 11](#_Toc50120344)

[2.5 Institution 13](#_Toc50120345)

[2.5.1 Universities 13](#_Toc50120346)

[2.5.1 NUHEIs 16](#_Toc50120347)

[3. Skills utilisation 19](#_Toc50120348)

[4. Further study 20](#_Toc50120349)

[5. Satisfaction 22](#_Toc50120350)

[5.1 Study level 22](#_Toc50120351)

[5.2 Time series 23](#_Toc50120352)

[5.3 International benchmarking 26](#_Toc50120353)

[5.4 Study area 26](#_Toc50120354)

[Appendix 1: Survey methodology 28](#_Toc50120355)

[Response rates by institution 28](#_Toc50120356)

[Data representativeness 32](#_Toc50120357)

[Appendix 2: Labour market and graduate satisfaction definitions 35](#_Toc50120358)

[Examples of graduate labour market outcomes 35](#_Toc50120359)

[Appendix 3: 2020 GOS item summary 36](#_Toc50120360)

[Appendix 4: Study area concordance 45](#_Toc50120361)

[Appendix 5: Additional tables 48](#_Toc50120362)

[5.1 List of National Report and associated tables 48](#_Toc50120363)

[5.2 Additional themes and associated tables 50](#_Toc50120364)

[5.2.1 Additional detail relevant to National Report tables 50](#_Toc50120365)

List of Tables

[Table 1 Undergraduate employment rates, by survey round, GOS 2019 and GOS 2020 (%) 6](#_Toc50643437)

[Table 2 Graduate employment and study outcomes, by study level, 2019 and 2020 9](#_Toc50643438)

[Table 3 Full-time and overall employment rates, by study level, 2009-2020 (%) 10](#_Toc50643439)

[Table 4 Median salaries by gender and level of study, 2009-2020 ($) 10](#_Toc50643440)

[Table 5 Undergraduate employment outcomes, by study area, 2019 and 2020 (%) 12](#_Toc50643441)

[Table 6 Undergraduate median full-time salaries by study area, 2019 and 2020 13](#_Toc50643442)

[Table 7 Undergraduate full-time employment rate and median full-time salary by university, 2019 and 2020, % 14](#_Toc50643443)

[Table 8 Undergraduate overall employment rate and labour force participation by university, 2019 and 2020, % 15](#_Toc50643444)

[Table 9 Undergraduate labour force indicators, 2018-2020 (NUHEIs only) 17](#_Toc50643445)

[Table 10 Main reason not working more hours, of undergraduates employed part-time, by preference for more hours, 2020 (%) 19](#_Toc50643446)

[Table 11 Main reason for working in job in 2020 that doesn’t fully use skills and education, 2020 (%) 20](#_Toc50643447)

[Table 12 Undergraduate further full-time study status in 2020, by original field of study (%) 21](#_Toc50643448)

[Table 13 Study area of undergraduates in further full-time study in 2020 (%) 21](#_Toc50643449)

[Table 14 Undergraduate satisfaction, % agreement 22](#_Toc50643450)

[Table 15 Postgraduate coursework satisfaction, % agreement 22](#_Toc50643451)

[Table 16 Postgraduate research satisfaction, % agreement 23](#_Toc50643452)

[Table 17 Undergraduate satisfaction 2010–2020, % agreement 24](#_Toc50643453)

[Table 18 Postgraduate coursework satisfaction, 2010–2020, % agreement 24](#_Toc50643454)

[Table 19 PREQ 2007-2020, % agreement 24](#_Toc50643455)

[Table 20 Overall satisfaction of undergraduates, UK (NSS) and Australia (CEQ), 2008–2020, % agreement 26](#_Toc50643456)

[Table 21 Undergraduate satisfaction by study area, 2019 and 2020, % agreement 26](#_Toc50643457)

[Table 1.1 GOS 2020 collection summary 28](#_Toc50643458)

[Table 1.2 GOS 2020 response rates by institution, November/Feb 2019/2020 and May 2020 collections (%) 29](#_Toc50643459)

[Table 1.3 GOS 2020 sample and response characteristics, by respondent type 32](#_Toc50643460)

[Table 1.4 GOS 2020 sample and response characteristics, by study area 33](#_Toc50643461)

## 1. Introduction

This National Report focuses on the main indicators over time as outlined on the QILT website such as Labour Market Outcomes (rates of full-time employment, overall employment, labour force participation and median full-time salaries), Further Study Outcomes and Graduate Satisfaction. The report also discusses some areas of focus such as the impact of COVID-19 on labour force outcomes, gender differences and the gender pay gap, skills utilisation including graduate occupations and reasons for skills based or time based “underemployment”. The Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) also collects information relevant to themes beyond the scope of this report, such as the importance of the course, how well the course prepared graduates for work and further study, foundation, collaborative and adaptive graduate attributes and more detailed labour force breakdowns, including graduates working in their own businesses, unpaid work and unemployment levels. Reporting of graduate labour market outcomes in this report focuses on domestic graduates only. In the past, tracking labour market outcomes of international graduates has proved more difficult, though from the 2021 Graduate Outcomes Survey it is proposed to engage in more intensive efforts in this area. Reporting of graduate satisfaction focuses on all graduates, both domestic and international graduates combined.

This report is supported by a [PowerBI workbook](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiM2ZjOTkxNGQtMzc5NS00YjZmLWE5MTctYjlhZjY2ZTZmNGRkIiwidCI6IjBhNGQ1MDgwLTUxNWMtNDVlNi1hN2FiLTFiZjI1OTZhNTY0OCJ9) which allows readers to further explore the data presented in this report. It is also supported by a set of additional static tables which provide additional data and detail out of scope of this report, but which may be of interest to the reader.

The GOS was first implemented in 2016 to replace the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS). The AGS comprised the Graduate Destinations Survey (GDS), which had been in place since the 1970s, and the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and Postgraduate Research Questionnaire (PREQ), which had been in place since the 1990s. Please note that the introduction of the GOS in 2016 represented a break in time series from the previous AGS and this is represented in time series charts and tables in this report. More information can be found in the [2016 GOS Methodological Report](https://www.qilt.edu.au/docs/default-source/gos-reports/2016/2016-graduate-outcomes-survey-methodological-report90158791b1e86477b58fff00006709da.pdf?sfvrsn=ec03e23c_4). This break is represented as a break in the line on time series charts in this report.

The 2020 GOS was primarily conducted as a national online survey among 112 higher education institutions including all 41 Table A and B universities and 71 Non-University Higher Education Institutions (NUHEIs). A total of 131,780 valid survey responses were collected across all study levels, representing a response rate of 42.3 per cent, which is a slight decrease from 44.2 per cent, achieved in 2019.

The following report provides high level results from the GOS 2020. Further detail is available from <https://www.qilt.edu.au/about-this-site/graduate-employment>

## 2. Labour market outcomes

### 2.1 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 has had a major impact on the Australian labour market, including graduate employment outcomes. As could be expected, graduate employment rates have declined between 2019 and 2020. The full-time undergraduate employment rate, for example, fell from 72.2 per cent to 68.7 per cent, the second lowest result ever since the 68.1 per cent reported in 2014.

However, measuring the impact of the pandemic is complicated by the structure of the GOS, which is administered across three periods each year – in November of the previous year and in February and May of the current year. The May survey round is the largest, accounting for around two-thirds of responses collected.

Since economic and social restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19 were introduced in Australia progressively from late January 2020, they would be expected to affect graduate outcomes in the May 2020 results but would not be reflected in the earlier November 2019 and February 2020 data.

Undergraduate results from each of the 2020 GOS survey rounds are shown in Table 1. Survey results from a particular round are best compared with the equivalent round in other survey years, since results by round are not adjusted for seasonal effects.

A downturn in graduate labour market outcomes was already evident in the November round of the GOS, with full-time employment falling from 71.0 per cent in November 2019 to 68.0 per cent in November 2020. This fall of three percentage points was nearly as large as the fall of 3.7 percentage points between May 2019 and May 2020 (from 72.7 per cent to 69.0 per cent).

Table 1 Undergraduate employment rates, by survey round, GOS 2019 and GOS 2020 (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | GOS 2019 November | GOS 2019 February | GOS 2019 May | **GOS 2019 Total** | GOS 2020 November | GOS 2020 February | GOS 2020 May | **GOS 2020 Total** |
| Full-time employment | 71.0 | 70.2 | 72.7 | 72.2 | 68.0 | 69.7 | 69.0 | 68.7 |
| Overall employment | 85.9 | 83.2 | 87.2 | 86.8 | 84.8 | 81.2 | 85.4 | 85.1 |

Results by survey round therefore suggest a weakening of the labour market for recent graduates which predates, but was then worsened by, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is consistent with results from the ABS Labour Force Survey which show that that the national unemployment rate reached a low point of 5.0 per cent in late 2018 and early 2019 before increasing to 5.3 per cent in October 2019 and then 7.1 per cent in May 2019 (seasonally adjusted). Therefore, in interpreting results in the remainder of this report which are not disaggregated by survey round, it should be borne in mind that the downturn in graduate outcomes is likely the result of both the pandemic and general labour market conditions.

The COVID-19 restrictions have had an impact on graduate employment outcomes beyond the headline employment rates. The GOS follows ABS Labour Force Survey concepts and definitions in measuring graduate employment outcomes. This means graduates are considered employed if they work at least one hour in the survey reference week, or usually work one hour per week. Graduates are considered to be employed full-time if they actually work 35 hours per week or more, or usually work that many hours. Examining the hours actually worked by employed graduates therefore provides an additional insight into employment trends.

The average number of actual hours worked by graduates dipped markedly in the May 2020 round of the GOS. As shown in Table A, hours worked by employed undergraduates declined only slightly between November 2018 and November 2019 and were essentially stable between the February 2019 and February 2020 rounds of the survey. Between May 2019 and May 2020, however, there was a substantial fall in average hours worked per week from 32.2 hours to 28.4 hours.

The reduction in working hours was particularly pronounced for graduates working on a part-time basis. For these graduates, average hours worked per week fell 22 per cent between May 2019 and May 2020 (from 18.9 hours to 14.7 hours), while for graduates working full-time the reduction was 6 per cent (from 41.1 hours to 38.5 hours).

Table A – Average hours worked per week for employed undergraduates, by full-time/part-time status and by survey round, GOS 2019 and GOS 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | GOS 2019 November | GOS 2019 February | GOS 2019 May | GOS 2020 November | GOS 2020 February | GOS 2020 May |
| Employed part-time | 19.7 | 17.9 | 18.9 | 19.6 | 18.1 | 14.7 |
| Employed full-time | 41.3 | 41.0 | 40.7 | 41.2 | 41.1 | 38.5 |
| Total | 33.7 | 32.7 | 32.2 | 33.1 | 32.8 | 28.4 |

Another item in the GOS that reflects the impact of pandemic restrictions is the proportion of graduates reporting they have been away from work for any reason, which includes people temporarily stood down due to COVID-19. These graduates, who could potentially have been in receipt of payments under the JobKeeper program, form part of the employed population in accordance with standard ABS Labour Force Survey concepts used in the GOS.

As with hours worked, there were no substantial changes in the proportion of employed undergraduates who were away from work between the November rounds of the 2019 and 2020 GOS, or the February rounds of the respective surveys. In the May 2020 round, however, there was a sharp increase in the proportion away from work to 13.0 per cent compared with 2.4 per cent in May 2019.

Again, the impact of the pandemic was far greater on graduates working part-time. Although the proportion of full-time employees who were away from work more than trebled between May 2019 and May 2020 (increasing from 1.4 per cent to 4.7 per cent), the proportion of part-time employees who were away from work increased six-fold (from 4.0 per cent to 24.3 per cent).

Table B – Proportion of employed undergraduates who were away from work, by full-time/part-time status and by survey round, GOS 2019 and GOS 2020 (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | GOS 2019 November | GOS 2019 February | GOS 2019 May | GOS 2020 November | GOS 2020 February | GOS 2020 May |
| Employed full-time | 1.9 | 3.8 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 3.7 | 4.7 |
| Employed part-time | 5.7 | 6.8 | 4.0 | 4.7 | 7.5 | 24.3 |
| Total | 3.2 | 4.9 | 2.4 | 2.9 | 5.1 | 13.0 |

The greater impact of the pandemic restrictions on graduates working part-time is likely due to the nature of the industries and workplaces in which they are employed. Graduates employed on a part-time basis are more likely to be employed in non-professional occupations such as Sales, Community and personal services and Clerical and administration occupations. They are therefore more likely to be employed in industries requiring face to face interaction, for example Arts and recreation services, Accommodation and food services, Administrative and support services and Retail trade, which have more often been required to cut back their operations. In contrast, graduates employed full-time are more likely to be employed in professional occupations which can often be undertaken via remote working arrangements or which have continued in person in industries such as Health care and social assistance, Professional, scientific and technical services, Education and training, Public administration and safety and Financial and insurance services.

### 2.2 Study Level

In general, younger and less experienced persons fare worse in a downturn, as shown in recent months by ABS Labour Force Surveys and has occurred in previous recessions. The 2020 Graduate Outcomes Survey confirms these findings, as shown by Table 2. For example, the full-time employment rate among postgraduate coursework graduates fell from 86.8 per cent in 2019 to 85.6 per cent in 2020, a decline of 1.2 percentage points. There was a broadly similar fall in the full-time employment rate among postgraduate research graduates from 81.1 per cent in 2019 to 80.1 per cent in 2020, a decline of 1.0 percentage points. This compares with the much sharper decline in the undergraduate full-time employment rate of 3.5 percentage points. Similarly, the overall employment rate fell more sharply among undergraduates by 1.7 percentage points in comparison with falls of 1.1 percentage points among postgraduate coursework graduates and 0.7 percentage points among postgraduate research graduates. When there are fewer job opportunities available, persons become discouraged from seeking work and this is shown by the reduction in the labour force participation rate among undergraduates falling from 92.4 per cent in 2019 to 91.4 per cent in 2020, a fall of 1.0 percentage points. There was a smaller fall in the labour force participation rate among postgraduate coursework graduates of 0.8 percentage points while it actually rose slightly among postgraduate research graduates by 0.4 percentage points.

Reporting of graduate salaries in the 2020 GOS includes all graduates employed full-time. The GOS asks graduates about their ‘usual’ salary level so it is likely COVID-19 will have less impact on the reporting of graduate salaries, at least in the short-term. The median undergraduate salary level increased from $62,600 in 2019 to $64,700 in 2020, an increase of $2,100 or 3.2 per cent. Female undergraduates continue to earn less than male undergraduates in 2020, $63,400 compared with $65,000 respectively, a difference of $1,600. This equates to a gender pay gap of 2.5 per cent, decreasing from 4.9 per cent in 2019.

Higher level qualifications generally lead to improved salary outcomes in addition to improved employment outcomes. The median salary of undergraduates employed full-time in 2020 was $64,700 per year while for postgraduate coursework graduates it was $87,400 and for postgraduate research graduates it was $93,000, as shown in Table 2. The median undergraduate salary increased by $2,100 or 3.2 per cent in 2020, while the postgraduate coursework salary increased by $2,100 or 2.4 per cent and postgraduate research increased by $3,000 or 3.2 per cent. 18.5 per cent of undergraduates proceeded to further study immediately following completion of their degree in 2020, very slightly down from 18.9 per cent in 2019. This result is perhaps a little surprising since in the past graduates have been more inclined to undertake further study when there were fewer job opportunities available. This may be the result of COVID-19 restrictions being in place for a relatively short period of time when the survey was undertaken and it may take time for graduates to adjust their behaviour. It will be important to monitor the propensity to engage in further study should the downturn in economic and labour market conditions persist.

**Table 2 Graduate employment and study outcomes, by study level, 2019 and 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Study**  | **Undergraduate 2019** | **Undergraduate 2020** | **Postgraduate coursework 2019** | **Postgraduate coursework 2020** | **Postgraduate research 2019** | **Postgraduate research 2020** |
| In full-time employment (as a proportion of those available for full-time work) (%) | 72.2 | 68.7 | 86.8 | 85.6 | 81.1 | 80.1 |
| Overall employed (as a proportion of those available for any work) (%) | 86.8 | 85.1 | 92.7 | 91.6 | 90.7 | 90.0 |
| Labour force participation rate (%) | 92.4 | 91.4 | 96.3 | 95.5 | 93.9 | 94.3 |
| Median salary, employed full-time ($) | 62,600 | 64,700 | 85,300 | 87,400 | 90,000 | 93,000 |
| In full-time study (%) | 18.9 | 18.5 | 6.0 | 6.7 | 5.8 | 7.1 |

### 2.3 Time series

As noted above, the undergraduate full-time employment rate of 68.7 per cent in 2020 is the second lowest ever with the low point of 68.1 per cent being reported in 2014, as shown by Table 3. The overall employment rate of 85.1 per cent is the lowest on record with the previous lowest figure being 85.9 per cent during the last recession in 1992. The postgraduate coursework full-time employment rate of 85.6 per cent is the lowest reported since the 85.1 per cent reported in 2016. Similarly, the postgraduate research graduate full-time employment rate of 80.1 per cent is the lowest reported since the 80.1 per cent reported in 2016.

**Table 3 Full-time and overall employment rates, by study level, 2009-2020 (%)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Undergraduate full-time employment** | **Undergraduate overall employment** | **Postgraduate coursework full-time employment** | **Postgraduate coursework overall employment** | **Postgraduate research full-time employment** | **Postgraduate research overall employment** |
| 2009 | 79.2 | 92.7 | 87.6 | 94.5 | 85.3 | 94.6 |
| 2010 | 76.2 | 91.8 | 86.4 | 94.1 | 84.6 | 93.9 |
| 2011 | 76.3 | 91.6 | 85.0 | 93.6 | 83.0 | 93.1 |
| 2012 | 76.1 | 91.7 | 85.4 | 93.9 | 81.9 | 93.6 |
| 2013 | 71.3 | 90.0 | 83.2 | 92.6 | 78.5 | 91.2 |
| 2014 | 68.1 | 89.2 | 82.5 | 93.1 | 75.8 | 91.0 |
| 2015 | 68.8 | 89.5 | 82.7 | 92.7 | 73.0 | 89.1 |
| 2016 | 70.9 | 86.4 | 85.1 | 92.4 | 80.1 | 90.3 |
| 2017 | 71.8 | 86.5 | 86.1 | 92.6 | 80.4 | 90.6 |
| 2018 | 72.9 | 87.0 | 86.9 | 92.9 | 82.3 | 91.8 |
| 2019 | 72.2 | 86.8 | 86.8 | 92.7 | 81.1 | 90.7 |
| 2020 | 68.7 | 85.1 | 85.6 | 91.6 | 80.1 | 90.0 |

Over the longer term the gender gap in graduate salaries has tended to decline over time though change has been slow and the gender gap remains, as shown by Table 4. In 2009, female undergraduates earned $47,000, which was $3,000 or 6.0 per cent lower than their male counterparts. As noted above, in 2020, the gender gap in undergraduate median salaries had fallen to $1,600 or 2.5 per cent. Similarly, the gender gap in postgraduate coursework salaries has declined over time, with females earning $15,000 or 19.2 per cent lower in 2009 in comparison with a gap of $12,500 or 13.0 per cent in 2020. The gender gap in postgraduate research graduate salaries has also tended to decline over time, falling from $3,000 or 4.3 per cent in 2009 to $2,000 or 2.1 per cent in 2019. However, it increased to $3,100 or 3.3 per cent in 2020, Note, there are a much smaller number of survey responses for postgraduate research graduates and hence there tends to be more variation in the data at this level of study.

**Table 4 Median salaries by gender and level of study, 2009-2020**[[1]](#footnote-1) **($)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Undergraduate females** | **Undergraduate males** | **Postgraduate coursework females** | **Postgraduate coursework males** | **Postgraduate research females** | **Postgraduate research males** |
| 2009 | 47,000 | 50,000 | 63,000 | 78,000 | 67,000 | 70,000 |
| 2010 | 48,000 | 50,000 | 65,000 | 80,000 | 70,000 | 72,000 |
| 2011 | 50,000 | 52,000 | 68,000 | 80,000 | 73,000 | 75,000 |
| 2012 | 50,000 | 55,000 | 70,000 | 85,000 | 75,000 | 79,000 |
| 2013 | 51,630 | 55,000 | 70,000 | 87,000 | 78,300 | 80,000 |
| 2014 | 51,600 | 55,000 | 72,000 | 90,000 | 80,000 | 82,000 |
| 2015 | 53,000 | 55,000 | 73,000 | 90,000 | 80,300 | 84,000 |
| 2016 | 56,400 | 60,000 | 75,700 | 90,000 | 83,300 | 88,300 |
| 2017 | 59,000 | 60,100 | 76,000 | 91,000 | 86,000 | 89,800 |
| 2018 | 60,000 | 63,000 | 79,000 | 92,500 | 90,000 | 90,200 |
| 2019 | 61,500 | 64,700 | 81,300 | 95,000 | 90,000 | 92,000 |
| 2020 | 63,400 | 65,000 | 83,500 | 96,000 | 91,900 | 95,000 |

### 2.4 Study area

The 2020 GOS confirms findings from the recent ABS Labour Force Surveys that workers in service type activities like the events and entertainment industries have been most impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions. For example, the undergraduate full-time employment rate among Pharmacy graduates actually improved by 0.7 percentage points from 95.7 per cent in 2019 to 96.4 per cent in 2020, as shown by Table 5. The full-time employment rate among Teacher education undergraduates only slightly dipped from 80.8 per cent in 2019 to 80.6 per cent in 2020

The 2020 GOS confirms findings from the recent ABS Labour Force Surveys that workers in service type activities like the events and entertainment industries have been most impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions. For example, the largest falls in undergraduate full-time employment by study area have been in Communications, down from 60.1 per cent in 2019 to 52.8 per cent in 2020, a fall of 7.3 percentage points, Creative arts down 7.1 percentage points, Architecture and built environment, down 6.8 percentage points and Dentistry, down 6.2 percentage points..

Median undergraduate full-time salaries in 2020 ranged between study areas from a high of $84,000 down to $49,600, with a standard deviation of $7,800, as shown by Table 4. The areas with the highest graduate salaries were Dentistry at $84,000, Medicine $75,000, Social work $70,000, Teacher education $70,000, and Engineering $69,500. The study areas with the lowest full-time median undergraduate salaries were Pharmacy at $49,600, Creative arts $52,000, Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation, $53,500 and Communication, $55,600. The variation in salary between study areas was higher for male graduates, with a standard deviation of $8,300 compared to $7,400 for female graduates.

The gender gap in undergraduate salaries immediately upon graduation can be explained, in part, by the fact that females are more likely to graduate from study areas which receive lower levels of remuneration. However, it is also the case that at the undergraduate level females earn less overall than their male counterparts within most study areas. The study areas which exhibit the highest gaps between male and female salaries include Dentistry with a gap of $10,700, Law and paralegal studies $4,900, Business and management $3,400, Humanities, culture and social sciences $3,100, and Science and Mathematics $2,800. Social Work and Engineering were the exceptions where female undergraduate median salaries are higher than or equal to their male counterparts. This demonstrates that beyond subject choice, the gender gap in median graduate salaries persists due to a range of other factors such as occupation, age, experience, personal factors and possible inequalities within workplaces.

Table 5 Undergraduate employment outcomes, by study area, 2019 and 2020[[2]](#footnote-2) (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Study area | Full-time employment 2019 | Full-time employment 2020 | Overall employment 2019 | Overall employment 2020 | Labour force participation rate 2019 | Labour force participation rate 2020 |
| Science and mathematics | 63.4 | 59.1 | 82.4 | 81.7 | 84.1 | 84.3 |
| Computing and information systems | 75.9 | 72.1 | 82.9 | 81.3 | 94.7 | 93.8 |
| Engineering | 84.8 | 83.0 | 88.4 | 87.6 | 95.3 | 95.3 |
| Architecture and built environment | 74.5 | 67.7 | 86.3 | 82.3 | 93.9 | 93.5 |
| Agriculture and environmental studies | 72.6 | 67.4 | 89.1 | 84.4 | 92.7 | 93.6 |
| Health services and support | 70.5 | 67.2 | 89.9 | 87.6 | 92.9 | 92.9 |
| Medicine | 91.1 | 86.7 | 91.9 | 90.8 | 88.3 | 88.9 |
| Nursing | 76.3 | 72.7 | 90.4 | 89.2 | 97.3 | 96.2 |
| Pharmacy | 95.7 | 96.4 | 97.5 | 95.8 | 98.5 | 96.3 |
| Dentistry | 86.2 | 80.0 | 93.7 | 90.6 | 94.7 | 90.4 |
| Veterinary science | 81.9 | 78.2 | 91.6 | 89.9 | 84.9 | 88.1 |
| Rehabilitation | 92.4 | 87.3 | 96.2 | 94.4 | 98.7 | 97.9 |
| Teacher education | 80.8 | 80.6 | 92.7 | 90.9 | 95.3 | 94.4 |
| Business and management | 76.6 | 74.3 | 88.0 | 86.4 | 96.6 | 95.3 |
| Humanities, culture and social sciences | 64.3 | 60.9 | 83.9 | 83.4 | 90.0 | 88.6 |
| Social work | 70.2 | 67.2 | 84.8 | 85.0 | 95.3 | 94.3 |
| Psychology | 63.4 | 61.4 | 86.3 | 84.4 | 88.7 | 88.1 |
| Law and paralegal studies | 77.3 | 75.7 | 86.5 | 85.7 | 94.8 | 94.4 |
| Creative arts | 52.9 | 45.8 | 81.8 | 78.7 | 90.7 | 87.7 |
| Communications | 60.1 | 52.8 | 82.8 | 79.2 | 90.0 | 87.3 |
| Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation | 56.4 | 52.4 | 83.4 | 82.4 | 96.5 | 91.3 |
| All study areas\* | 72.2 | 68.7 | 86.8 | 85.1 | 92.4 | 91.4 |
| Standard deviation (percentage points (pp)) | 11.8 | 12.8 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.1 | 3.7 |

Table 6 Undergraduate median full-time salaries by study area, 2019 and 2020[[3]](#footnote-3)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Study area | Male ($) 2019 | Male ($) 2020 | Female ($) 2019 | Female ($) 2020 | Total ($) 2019 | Total ($) 2020 |
| Science and mathematics | 63,400 | 65,400 | 59,900 | 62,600 | 60,000 | 64,000 |
| Computing and Information Systems | 64,600 | 65,200 | 63,000 | 65,000 | 64,000 | 65,000 |
| Engineering | 67,800 | 69,400 | 67,000 | 70,000 | 67,500 | 69,500 |
| Architecture and built environment | 65,000 | 65,000 | 55,000 | 62,600 | 60,300 | 64,700 |
| Agriculture and environmental studies | 60,500 | 62,300 | 56,200 | 60,100 | 60,000 | 61,500 |
| Health services and support | 65,100 | 66,000 | 62,600 | 65,000 | 63,000 | 65,100 |
| Medicine | 73,400 | 75,300 | 73,000 | 74,000 | 73,100 | 75,000 |
| Nursing | 63,000 | 65,400 | 62,600 | 64,200 | 62,600 | 64,200 |
| Pharmacy | 48,000 | 49,600 | 48,000 | 49,600 | 48,000 | 49,600 |
| Dentistry | 88,500 | 90,000 | 84,000 | 79,300 | 88,200 | 84,000 |
| Veterinary science | n/a | n/a | 55,000 | 57,500 | 55,000 | 57800 |
| Rehabilitation | 65,000 | 65,000 | 64,700 | 65,000 | 64,700 | 65,000 |
| Teacher education | 68,600 | 70,000 | 67,800 | 69,900 | 68,000 | 70,000 |
| Business and management | 60,000 | 62,500 | 57,600 | 59,100 | 59,500 | 60,000 |
| Humanities, culture and social sciences | 63,000 | 65,000 | 60,000 | 61,900 | 61,000 | 62,600 |
| Social work | 66,700 | 68,000 | 67,600 | 70,000 | 67,600 | 70,000 |
| Psychology | 64,700 | 65,000 | 60,000 | 62,800 | 61,300 | 63,000 |
| Law and paralegal studies | 67,600 | 68,900 | 61,300 | 64,000 | 63,200 | 65,000 |
| Creative arts | 54,800 | 52,200 | 50,000 | 51,600 | 52,000 | 52,000 |
| Communications | 52800 | 57,400 | 54,800 | 55,300 | 54,300 | 55,600 |
| Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation | n/a | n/a | 49,300 | n/a | 50,000 | 53,500 |
| All study areas\* | 64,700 | 65,000 | 61,500 | 63,400 | 62,600 | 64,700 |
| Standard deviation ($) | 8,400 | 8,300 | 8,400 | 7,400 | 8,600 | 7,800 |

### 2.5 Institution

2.5.1 Universities

Employment and salary outcomes vary across institutions. It is important to acknowledge that factors beyond the quality of teaching, careers advice and the like, such as course offerings, the composition of the student population and variations in state/territory and regional labour markets, may also impact on employment and salary outcomes. Note also that the figures in parentheses in the tables that follow indicate the confidence intervals for the survey estimates. Since the number of survey responses for each institution can be relatively small, the confidence intervals may overlap for survey estimates from one year to the next, broadly indicating the change in labour market outcomes may not be statistically significant.

Most universities experienced falls in undergraduate full-time employment in line with the overall decline in labour market conditions in 2020, as shown by Table 7. However, there were only three universities that experienced an increase in their undergraduate full-time employment rate between 2019 and 2020 and these were all regional universities. They were the University of Southern Queensland where the undergraduate full-time employment rate increased from 76.1 per cent to 78.9 per cent, an increase of 2.8 percentage points, the University of New England, up from 78.2 per cent to 80.6 per cent, an increase of 2.4 percentage points and Southern Cross University, up slightly from 74.9 per cent to 75.1 per cent, an increase of 0.2 percentage points, while noting the point made above about the likely statistical significance of changes in survey estimates from one year to the next. Graduates from regional universities are more likely to be older, study externally and part-time and maintain a continuing connection with the labour market which explains, in part, why graduates from these universities may have fared better in the current downturn. Also graduates from regional universities are more likely to have completed vocational degrees and, as noted above, these graduates have also fared better in the current downturn.

Table 7 Undergraduate full-time employment rate and median full-time salary by university, 2019 and 2020, %

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **University**  | **Full-time employment rate****2019** | **Full-time employment rate****2020** | **Median full-time salary****2019** | **Median full-time salary****2020** |
| Australian Catholic University | 74.5 (72.7, 76.3) | 72.4 (70.6, 74.1) | 62,600 (61,700, 63,500) | 64,000 (62,900, 65,100) |
| Bond University | 65.5 (60.3, 70.1) | 61.2 (55.3, 66.8) | 57,200 (53,400, 61,000) | 62,000 (57,500, 66,500) |
| Central Queensland University | 79.6 (77.5, 81.4) | 73.0 (69.8, 75.9) | 68,000 (66,400, 69,600) | 69,700 (67,000, 72,300) |
| Charles Darwin University | 81.7 (78.5, 84.3) | 79.1 (75.4, 82.2) | 69,000 (67,300, 70,700) | 68,000 (66,500, 69,500) |
| Charles Sturt University | 86.4 (85.1, 87.6) | 84.7 (83.2, 86.0) | 67,100 (65,800, 68,400) | 68,900 (67,700, 70,000) |
| Curtin University | 72.4 (70.6, 74.1) | 69.7 (67.9, 71.4) | 65,200 (64,500, 66,000) | 65,700 (64,500, 67,000) |
| Deakin University | 72.8 (71.4, 74.2) | 70.4 (68.9, 71.9) | 60,000 (59,600, 60,400) | 65,000 (63,800, 66,200) |
| Edith Cowan University | 58.9 (56.5, 61.3) | 57.1 (54.5, 59.7) | 63,600 (61,500, 65,600) | 65,300 (63,400, 67,300) |
| Federation University Australia | 75.3 (72.0, 78.2) | 67.2 (63.6, 70.6) | 64,000 (62,000, 66,000) | 64,000 (60,800, 67,200) |
| Flinders University | 65.3 (63.0, 67.6) | 63.1 (60.6, 65.6) | 62,600 (60,300, 65,000) | 64,500 (63,100, 65,900) |
| Griffith University | 64.6 (62.8, 66.4) | 62.1 (60.2, 63.9) | 60,000 (59,200, 60,800) | 60,200 (58,800, 61,500) |
| James Cook University | 80.3 (78.3, 82.2) | 75.9 (73.5, 78.0) | 65,000 (63,600, 66,400) | 65,900 (63,900, 67,900) |
| La Trobe University | 70.2 (68.4, 72.0) | 64.5 (62.4, 66.6) | 60,000 (59,100, 60,900) | 62,000 (60,400, 63,600) |
| Macquarie University | 70.9 (69.4, 72.4) | 67.8 (66.1, 69.5) | 60,500 (59,300, 61,800) | 62,600 (61,300, 63,900) |
| Monash University | 74.7 (73.3, 76.0) | 72.3 (70.9, 73.7) | 61,000 (60,000, 62,000) | 63,500 (62,200, 64,800) |
| Murdoch University | 61.4 (58.4, 64.3) | 54.8 (51.7, 57.9) | 62,500 (59,800, 65,200) | 65,700 (63,500, 67,900) |
| Queensland University of Technology | 70.3 (67.8, 72.7) | 68.0 (66.4, 69.5) | 59,000 (57,700, 60,300) | 62,600 (61,700, 63,500) |
| RMIT University | 71.4 (69.9, 72.8) | 64.3 (62.4, 66.0) | 58,700 (57,100, 60,300) | 60,000 (58,500, 61,500) |
| Southern Cross University | 74.9 (71.8, 77.8) | 75.1 (72.1, 77.8) | 65,000 (63,400, 66,600) | 65,700 (64,300, 67,100) |
| Swinburne University of Technology | 72.5 (70.4, 74.4) | 70.2 (68.1, 72.1) | 65,000 (63,700, 66,300) | 68,000 (65,900, 70,100) |
| The Australian National University | 69.5 (66.5, 72.4) | 69.2 (66.5, 71.7) | 62,600 (61,200, 64,000) | 64,000 (62,800, 65,200) |
| The University of Adelaide | 67.4 (65.4, 69.3) | 63.5 (61.2, 65.8) | 62,000 (60,800, 63,300) | 62,000 (60,100, 63,900) |
| The University of Melbourne | 61.5 (59.2, 63.7) | 57.0 (54.7, 59.3) | 56,900 (55,100, 58,700) | 59,500 (58,400, 60,500) |
| The University of Notre Dame Australia | 77.3 (74.5, 79.8) | 73.8 (71.0, 76.4) | 64,000 (61,900, 66,100) | 65,200 (63,700, 66,700) |
| The University of Queensland | 72.8 (71.3, 74.3) | 70.8 (69.2, 72.4) | 61,800 (60,600, 63,000) | 62,600 (61,700, 63,500) |
| The University of South Australia | 73.5 (71.6, 75.3) | 67.8 (65.7, 69.9) | 62,600 (61,600, 63,700) | 62,600 (61,300, 64,000) |
| The University of Sydney | 80.1 (78.4, 81.6) | 75.1 (73.7, 76.4) | 62,600 (61,900, 63,300) | 65,000 (64,600, 65,400) |
| The University of Western Australia | 57.8 (54.4, 61.1) | 54.5 (50.8, 58.1) | 56,000 (53,300, 58,700) | 55,500 (52,800, 58,300) |
| Torrens University | 62.2 (59.1, 65.1) | 59.9 (56.7, 62.9) | 50,000 (48,500, 51,500) | 52,200 (49,600, 54,800) |
| University of Canberra | 75.7 (73.4, 77.8) | 71.5 (69.2, 73.7) | 63,900 (61,900, 65,900) | 66,800 (64,900, 68,600) |
| University of Divinity | 76.7 (63.9, 85.0) | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| University of New England | 78.2 (76.4, 79.8) | 80.6 (78.8, 82.2) | 68,900 (67,900, 69,900) | 70,000 (68,400, 71,600) |
| University of New South Wales | 80.2 (78.6, 81.7) | 76.2 (74.4, 77.8) | 65,000 (64,500, 65,500) | 67,500 (66,400, 68,600) |
| University of Newcastle | 76.5 (74.9, 78.1) | 74.4 (72.4, 76.2) | 64,700 (63,900, 65,500) | 65,200 (64,500, 65,800) |
| University of Southern Queensland | 76.1 (74.3, 77.7) | 78.9 (77.0, 80.6) | 69,400 (68,100, 70,700) | 70,700 (69,800, 71,600) |
| University of Tasmania | 78.2 (76.4, 79.8) | 72.3 (70.3, 74.2) | 68,000 (66,900, 69,100) | 70,300 (68,900, 71,700) |
| University of Technology Sydney | 76.6 (75.2, 77.8) | 70.8 (69.2, 72.3) | 60,000 (59,100, 60,900) | 62,000 (60,800, 63,300) |
| University of the Sunshine Coast | 61.7 (59.0, 64.2) | 59.3 (56.5, 62.0) | 60,600 (58,400, 62,800) | 62,600 (60,400, 64,800) |
| University of Wollongong | 72.8 (70.7, 74.7) | 67.9 (65.4, 70.3) | 60,200 (58,800, 61,600) | 62,600 (60,900, 64,300) |
| Victoria University | 65.8 (62.9, 68.6) | 57.8 (54.7, 60.7) | 61,500 (58,800, 64,200) | 60,100 (56,500, 63,600) |
| Western Sydney University | 67.7 (66.0, 69.2) | 58.8 (56.8, 60.8) | 62,600 (62,100, 63,100) | 63,400 (62,500, 64,400) |
| **All universities** | **72.5 (72.2, 72.8)** | **69.1 (68.8, 69.4)** | **62,600 (62,600, 62,600)** | **64,700 (64,300, 65,100)** |

\* Note: Cells marked with n/a had too few responses for meaningful analysis.

In 2020, universities with high median full-time undergraduate salaries immediately following graduation include the University of Southern Queensland, $70,700, University of Tasmania, $70,300, University of New England, $70,000, Central Queensland University, $69,700 and Charles Sturt University, $68,900. Note, a similar caveat applies with these universities having a larger number of graduates who studied externally, were older, studied part-time and maintained a continuing connection with the labour market while studying which explains, in part, why graduates from these universities may have reported higher salaries immediately upon graduation.

Table 8 Undergraduate overall employment rate and labour force participation by university, 2019 and 2020, %

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **University** | **Overall employed (as a proportion of those available for any work) (%)****2019** | **Overall employed (as a proportion of those available for any work) (%)****2020** | **Labour force participation rate (%)****2019** | **Labour force participation rate (%)****2020** |
| Australian Catholic University | 90.8 (89.8, 91.7) | 88.0 (87.0, 88.9) | 95.8 (95.1, 96.4) | 94.3 (93.6, 94.9) |
| Bond University | 80.4 (76.7, 83.3) | 72.3 (67.5, 76.5) | 91.6 (89.0, 93.3) | 90.4 (87.1, 92.7) |
| Central Queensland University | 89.7 (88.5, 90.8) | 87.1 (84.9, 88.8) | 94.5 (93.5, 95.2) | 93.7 (92.2, 94.9) |
| Charles Darwin University | 92.0 (90.1, 93.4) | 90.1 (87.8, 91.8) | 92.4 (90.7, 93.6) | 93.2 (91.3, 94.5) |
| Charles Sturt University | 92.6 (91.7, 93.4) | 91.9 (90.9, 92.7) | 94.7 (94.0, 95.3) | 94.7 (93.9, 95.3) |
| Curtin University | 86.4 (85.2, 87.5) | 86.6 (85.5, 87.7) | 94.6 (93.8, 95.2) | 94.1 (93.3, 94.7) |
| Deakin University | 88.1 (87.2, 88.9) | 88.2 (87.3, 89.0) | 93.9 (93.3, 94.5) | 92.4 (91.7, 93.0) |
| Edith Cowan University | 83.1 (81.5, 84.5) | 80.9 (79.1, 82.5) | 94.1 (93.0, 94.9) | 93.1 (91.9, 94.0) |
| Federation University Australia | 90.7 (89.1, 92.0) | 87.8 (85.9, 89.2) | 93.5 (92.2, 94.5) | 93.0 (91.6, 94.1) |
| Flinders University | 85.4 (84.0, 86.7) | 84.7 (83.1, 86.0) | 90.6 (89.5, 91.5) | 91.4 (90.3, 92.4) |
| Griffith University | 85.3 (84.1, 86.3) | 84.0 (82.8, 85.1) | 92.4 (91.5, 93.1) | 91.9 (91.1, 92.7) |
| James Cook University | 89.3 (87.9, 90.4) | 89.0 (87.5, 90.2) | 94.1 (93.1, 94.9) | 94.0 (92.9, 94.8) |
| La Trobe University | 87.8 (86.8, 88.7) | 85.9 (84.7, 87.1) | 92.5 (91.7, 93.2) | 93.0 (92.1, 93.7) |
| Macquarie University | 85.2 (84.2, 86.1) | 85.5 (84.4, 86.5) | 93.7 (93.0, 94.2) | 93.5 (92.8, 94.1) |
| Monash University | 88.6 (87.8, 89.4) | 86.6 (85.8, 87.4) | 91.4 (90.7, 92.1) | 90.3 (89.6, 90.9) |
| Murdoch University | 82.4 (80.3, 84.2) | 78.8 (76.5, 80.8) | 92.7 (91.3, 93.8) | 92.8 (91.3, 93.9) |
| Queensland University of Technology | 88.0 (86.4, 89.4) | 86.6 (85.6, 87.5) | 95.9 (94.8, 96.7) | 95.2 (94.6, 95.7) |
| RMIT University | 86.7 (85.8, 87.6) | 81.5 (80.2, 82.6) | 93.6 (92.9, 94.1) | 92.1 (91.2, 92.8) |
| Southern Cross University | 88.1 (86.2, 89.7) | 87.2 (85.4, 88.7) | 91.9 (90.3, 93.1) | 92.4 (91.1, 93.5) |
| Swinburne University of Technology | 86.0 (84.6, 87.2) | 82.9 (81.5, 84.2) | 91.5 (90.4, 92.4) | 91.2 (90.2, 92.1) |
| The Australian National University | 83.6 (81.5, 85.3) | 86.9 (85.2, 88.3) | 88.8 (87.2, 90.2) | 91.0 (89.7, 92.1) |
| The University of Adelaide | 84.5 (83.3, 85.6) | 81.9 (80.4, 83.2) | 88.0 (87.0, 88.9) | 86.0 (84.8, 87.1) |
| The University of Melbourne | 82.4 (81.3, 83.5) | 81.7 (80.5, 82.9) | 84.0 (83.0, 84.8) | 83.1 (82.1, 84.0) |
| The University of Notre Dame Australia | 87.8 (85.8, 89.4) | 87.6 (85.8, 89.1) | 96.7 (95.5, 97.5) | 93.6 (92.3, 94.6) |
| The University of Queensland | 87.0 (86.1, 87.9) | 86.0 (85.0, 86.9) | 93.1 (92.3, 93.7) | 91.6 (90.8, 92.3) |
| The University of South Australia | 88.3 (87.2, 89.3) | 85.5 (84.2, 86.7) | 93.9 (93.0, 94.6) | 93.7 (92.8, 94.5) |
| The University of Sydney | 89.3 (88.2, 90.3) | 86.6 (85.7, 87.5) | 91.2 (90.3, 92.0) | 90.7 (90.0, 91.4) |
| The University of Western Australia | 80.9 (79.0, 82.6) | 79.7 (77.6, 81.7) | 82.5 (80.9, 84.0) | 85.3 (83.6, 86.9) |
| Torrens University | 81.3 (79.2, 83.1) | 79.8 (77.7, 81.7) | 92.0 (90.6, 93.1) | 89.5 (87.9, 90.7) |
| University of Canberra | 88.8 (87.3, 90.0) | 86.5 (85.0, 87.8) | 95.3 (94.3, 96.0) | 94.5 (93.5, 95.3) |
| University of Divinity | 89.6 (81.9, 93.1) | 91.1 (82.3, 95.2) | 82.8 (75.9, 86.7) | 73.8 (65.4, 80.1) |
| University of New England | 87.3 (86.1, 88.3) | 86.5 (85.2, 87.6) | 91.7 (90.8, 92.4) | 90.3 (89.3, 91.1) |
| University of New South Wales | 88.5 (87.4, 89.6) | 86.7 (85.4, 87.8) | 94.2 (93.4, 94.9) | 93.9 (92.9, 94.6) |
| University of Newcastle | 90.7 (89.8, 91.6) | 88.2 (87.0, 89.3) | 95.1 (94.4, 95.7) | 93.5 (92.6, 94.3) |
| University of Southern Queensland | 88.9 (87.8, 89.9) | 89.7 (88.5, 90.7) | 94.6 (93.8, 95.2) | 94.5 (93.6, 95.2) |
| University of Tasmania | 90.3 (89.3, 91.2) | 87.2 (86.1, 88.3) | 87.2 (86.2, 88.1) | 83.4 (82.3, 84.4) |
| University of Technology Sydney | 88.4 (87.4, 89.2) | 85.8 (84.8, 86.8) | 96.1 (95.5, 96.5) | 93.8 (93.0, 94.4) |
| University of the Sunshine Coast | 84.2 (82.6, 85.6) | 82.8 (81.0, 84.3) | 92.7 (91.6, 93.6) | 91.9 (90.6, 92.9) |
| University of Wollongong | 87.9 (86.6, 89.0) | 87.4 (85.9, 88.7) | 93.8 (92.8, 94.5) | 93.4 (92.2, 94.3) |
| Victoria University | 83.3 (81.5, 85.0) | 79.6 (77.6, 81.4) | 92.5 (91.2, 93.6) | 90.9 (89.5, 92.1) |
| Western Sydney University | 82.1 (81.0, 83.1) | 76.2 (74.7, 77.6) | 92.6 (91.9, 93.3) | 91.4 (90.4, 92.2) |
| **All universities** | **87.0 (86.8, 87.2)** | **85.3 (85.1, 85.5)** | **92.4 (92.3, 92.6)** | **91.6 (91.5, 91.8)** |

2.5.1 NUHEIs

Since the number of students enrolled in individual Non-University Higher Education Institutions (NUHEIs) tends to be much smaller than at university level, data for individual NUHEIs have been pooled across the 2018, 2019 and 2020 surveys to improve the robustness and validity of data, as occurs on the ComparED website. Also, given the COVID-19 restrictions were only implemented towards the end of the 2020 GOS and, pooled data across three survey years diminishes variation in the data, the focus here is on survey estimates at a point in time rather than changes over time. Using this three-year aggregation, a number of NUHEIs have full-time undergraduate employment rates over 80 per cent, including Marcus Oldham College, 96.0 per cent, Moore Theological College Council, 91.9 per cent, Sydney College of Divinity, 82.8 per cent, International College of Hotel Management, 80.8 per cent, TAFE Queensland, 80.4 per cent and Avondale University College, 80.3 per cent. The same caveats about labour market outcomes at institution level apply even more so among NUHEIs which exhibit greater variation in course offerings by level of education and study area than among universities.

Table 9 shows undergraduate median full-time salaries for NUHEIs. NUHEIs with high median full-time undergraduate salaries include Tabor College of Higher Education, $65,200, Marcus Oldham College, $63,800, Avondale University College, $63,400, TAFE NSW, $62,600, and ACAP and NCPS, $62,500.

Table 9 Undergraduate labour force indicators, 2018-2020 (NUHEIs only)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NUHEI** | **In full-time employment (as a proportion of those available for full-time work) (%)** | **Overall employed (as a proportion of those available for any work) (%)** | **Labour force participation rate (%)** | **Median salary, employed full-time ($)** |
| Academy of Information Technology | 60.7 (52.3, 68.5) | 68.3 (60.9, 74.8) | 91.0 (85.8, 94.3) | 59,700 (53,300, 66,200) |
| ACAP and NCPS | 58.3 (54.4, 62.0) | 82.1 (79.6, 84.2) | 93.9 (92.3, 95.0) | 62,500 (59,600, 65,500) |
| Adelaide Central School of Art | n/a | 80.4 (72.7, 85.0) | 73.9 (68.6, 77.4) | n/a |
| Adelaide College of Divinity | n/a | n/a | 75.9 (66.0, 81.3) | n/a |
| Alphacrucis College | 69.8 (62.4, 76.2) | 79.7 (75.3, 83.4) | 84.1 (80.5, 87.0) | 55,000 (51,600, 58,400) |
| Australian Academy of Music and Performing Arts | n/a | 82.1 (69.8, 88.8) | 93.3 (83.0, 96.5) | n/a |
| Australian College of Christian Studies | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Australian College of Nursing | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Australian College of Theology Limited | 64.7 (58.6, 70.3) | 80.9 (77.6, 83.6) | 81.8 (79.1, 84.2) | 55,000 (48,700, 61,300) |
| Australian Institute of Business Pty Ltd | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Australian Institute of Management Education & Training | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Avondale University College | 80.3 (76.4, 83.4) | 86.7 (83.8, 88.9) | 95.3 (93.3, 96.4) | 63,400 (62,300, 64,600) |
| BBI - The Australian Institute of Theological Education | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Box Hill Institute | 52.9 (44.4, 61.1) | 85.1 (79.5, 89.0) | 91.0 (86.4, 93.6) | n/a |
| Campion College Australia | n/a | 78.1 (66.8, 85.1) | 84.2 (74.9, 89.0) | n/a |
| Canberra Institute of Technology | n/a | 73.1 (60.5, 81.3) | 96.3 (86.1, 98.0) | n/a |
| Chisholm Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Christian Heritage College | 77.6 (70.5, 83.1) | 85.0 (80.0, 88.4) | 89.6 (85.5, 92.1) | 61,900 (56,700, 67,100) |
| Collarts (Australian College of the Arts) | 38.7 (32.5, 45.5) | 75.3 (70.6, 79.2) | 92.4 (89.2, 94.3) | n/a |
| Eastern College Australia | 80.0 (66.0, 88.2) | 95.3 (88.2, 97.2) | 91.5 (84.3, 94.1) | n/a |
| Endeavour College of Natural Health | 65.5 (61.7, 69.0) | 89.2 (87.5, 90.5) | 92.3 (90.9, 93.3) | 60,000 (56,100, 63,900) |
| Engineering Institute of Technology | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Excelsia College | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Health Education & Training Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Holmes Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Holmesglen Institute | 73.4 (64.7, 80.2) | 88.4 (83.0, 91.7) | 93.1 (88.7, 95.4) | n/a |
| INSEARCH | 32.2 (25.9, 39.3) | 60.2 (56.4, 63.8) | 78.3 (75.5, 80.8) | n/a |
| International College of Hotel Management | 80.8 (67.9, 87.8) | 96.7 (87.3, 98.3) | 96.8 (87.8, 98.3) | n/a |
| International College of Management, Sydney | 73.9 (67.8, 79.0) | 84.8 (80.0, 88.3) | 95.8 (92.6, 97.4) | 50,000 (46,300, 53,700) |
| ISN Psychology Pty Ltd | n/a | 75.9 (NA, NA) | 87.9 (NA, NA) | n/a |
| Jazz Music Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Kaplan Business School | n/a | 82.8 (72.0, 87.9) | 90.6 (81.6, 93.4) | n/a |
| Kaplan Higher Education Pty Ltd | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Kent Institute Australia | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| King's Own Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| LCI Melbourne | 49.1 (40.8, 57.4) | 77.6 (70.7, 82.4) | 94.4 (89.3, 96.1) | n/a |
| Le Cordon Bleu Australia | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Leo Cussen Centre for Law | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Macleay College | 60.9 (54.3, 66.9) | 76.7 (71.7, 80.7) | 89.3 (85.6, 91.7) | 55,000 (51,000, 59,000) |
| Marcus Oldham College | 96.0 (92.9, 97.5) | 98.7 (96.4, 99.4) | 98.1 (95.6, 99.0) | 63,800 (56,800, 70,700) |
| Melbourne Institute of Technology | 78.8 (66.4, 86.8) | 78.9 (67.7, 86.3) | 92.7 (83.8, 96.3) | n/a |
| Melbourne Polytechnic | 58.8 (50.2, 66.7) | 84.5 (79.4, 88.0) | 91.7 (87.6, 93.9) | 50,100 (41,000, 59,200) |
| Moore Theological College | 91.9 (87.2, 94.4) | 89.9 (86.2, 92.0) | 86.8 (83.5, 88.8) | 60,000 (56,200, 63,800) |
| Morling College | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Nan Tien Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| National Art School | 37.5 (29.8, 46.1) | 76.6 (71.7, 80.5) | 81.5 (77.7, 84.4) | n/a |
| North Metropolitan TAFE | n/a | 69.7 (56.9, 79.5) | 73.3 (63.1, 80.9) | n/a |
| Perth Bible College | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Photography Studies College (Melbourne) | 54.3 (43.0, 64.9) | 84.6 (76.9, 88.9) | 94.5 (88.5, 96.4) | n/a |
| SAE Institute | 40.0 (37.1, 43.0) | 66.9 (64.5, 69.3) | 91.5 (90.0, 92.7) | 49,600 (47,500, 51,600) |
| South Metropolitan TAFE | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| SP Jain School of Management | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Stott's Colleges | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Study Group Australia Pty Limited | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Sydney College of Divinity | 82.8 (76.0, 87.5) | 90.6 (86.6, 93.0) | 87.9 (84.1, 90.4) | 60,000 (51,900, 68,100) |
| Tabor College of Higher Education | 61.1 (53.0, 68.5) | 81.4 (76.5, 84.8) | 95.9 (92.7, 97.2) | 65,200 (60,500, 69,900) |
| TAFE NSW | 57.1 (51.6, 62.5) | 77.1 (72.8, 80.7) | 93.1 (90.2, 94.9) | 62,600 (55,500, 69,700) |
| TAFE Queensland | 80.4 (70.7, 86.8) | 81.8 (73.5, 87.2) | 96.5 (90.5, 98.3) | n/a |
| TAFE South Australia | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| The Australian College of Physical Education | 67.9 (60.1, 74.5) | 90.1 (85.2, 93.1) | 96.5 (92.9, 98.0) | 57,400 (52,000, 62,800) |
| The Australian Institute of Music | 55.7 (50.4, 60.8) | 84.3 (81.2, 86.8) | 95.6 (93.6, 96.8) | 46,000 (42,400, 49,600) |
| The Cairnmillar Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| The College of Law Limited | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| The MIECAT Institute | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Think Education | 69.6 (65.6, 73.3) | 88.7 (86.7, 90.2) | 90.3 (88.6, 91.6) | 55,800 (52,900, 58,800) |
| UOW College | n/a | n/a | 77.4 (64.9, 85.6) | n/a |
| VIT (Victorian Institute of Technology) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Wentworth Institute of Higher Education | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia | 45.7 (35.1, 56.6) | 63.5 (54.3, 71.6) | 92.6 (86.1, 95.9) | n/a |
| William Angliss Institute | 70.0 (59.5, 78.0) | 85.1 (76.6, 89.8) | 94.0 (87.2, 96.3) | n/a |
| **All NUHEIs** | **61.4 (60.3, 62.5)** | **80.4 (79.8, 81.1)** | **90.1 (89.6, 90.5)** | **56,000 (54,800, 57,200)** |
| Standard deviation | 18.5 | 11.5 | 7.3 | 8,800 |

\* Note: Cells marked with n/a had too few responses for meaningful analysis.

## 3. Skills utilisation

The GOS includes a rich array of information about the nature of graduate employment. This section focuses on three commonly used measures of skills utilisation or the quality of graduate jobs; the proportion of graduates employed part-time seeking more hours of work, the proportion of graduates employed in managerial and professional occupations and, the proportion of graduates stating they believed their job did not allow them to fully utilise their skills or education. These provide benchmarks of the underutilisation of skills, and as such, it is important to monitor changes in these measures over time.

In 2020, the proportion of employed undergraduates seeking more hours of work, that is, underemployed part-time workers, was 21.8 per cent and this was higher than the 19.8 per cent in 2019 and 19.2 per cent in 2018. The main reasons that undergraduates were underemployed part-time workers in 2020 were because there were no more hours available in their current position, 36.5 per cent, they were studying, 12.6 per cent, or because there were no suitable jobs in my local area, 6.2 per cent.

Table 10 Main reason not working more hours, of undergraduates employed part-time, by preference for more hours, 2020 (%)

|  | **Seeking more hours – Male** | **Seeking more hours – Female** | **Seeking more hours – Total** | **Not seeking more hours – Male** | **Not seeking more hours – Female** | **Not seeking more hours – Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Studying | 14.5 | 11.6 | 12.6 | 52.4 | 36.1 | 40.0 |
| Short-term illness or injury | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Long-term health condition or disability | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 1.4 | 1.3 |
| Caring for children | 0.8 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 1.4 | 9.9 | 7.9 |
| Caring for family member with a health condition or disability | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| **Subtotal – Personal factors** | 16.8 | 16.0 | 16.3 | 55.4 | 48.7 | 50.3 |
| No suitable jobs in my area of expertise | 7.2 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 0.7 |
| No suitable jobs in my local area | 7.0 | 5.9 | 6.2 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Considered to be too young by employers | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Considered too old by employers | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| No jobs with a suitable number of hours | 6.0 | 5.0 | 5.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| No more hours available in current position | 33.5 | 37.8 | 36.5 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.6 |
| **Subtotal – Labour market factors** | 55.2 | 57.4 | 56.7 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.3 |
| Other | 28.1 | 26.6 | 27.1 | 38.3 | 45.0 | 43.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The proportion of undergraduates working in managerial and professional occupations is one measure of skills utilisation. These occupations are defined by the ABS as being commensurate with requiring bachelor level or higher qualifications. In 2020, four months after graduation, 69.5 per cent of undergraduates employed full-time were working in managerial or professional occupations which was slightly lower than the 69.9 per cent reported in 2019, 72.1 per cent reported in 2018 and 72.2 per cent in 2017. Further information relating to graduate occupations is available from the QILT Website, including [Excel tables](https://www.qilt.edu.au/qilt-surveys/graduate-employment) and [a data visualisation workbook.](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiM2ZjOTkxNGQtMzc5NS00YjZmLWE5MTctYjlhZjY2ZTZmNGRkIiwidCI6IjBhNGQ1MDgwLTUxNWMtNDVlNi1hN2FiLTFiZjI1OTZhNTY0OCJ9)

Graduates were also asked to indicate whether or not they believed that they were working in a job that allowed them to fully use their skills or education. In 2020, 28.1 per cent of undergraduates employed full-time indicated they were working in a job that did not allow them to fully use their skills or education, slightly down from 28.3 per cent in 2019, up from 27.1 per cent in 2018 and comparable to 28.2 per cent in 2017. In 2020 around one fifth, 20.1 per cent, of undergraduates who reported they were not fully utilising their skills or education, stated that this was because there were no suitable jobs in their area of expertise, with a further 14.1 per cent saying this was because there were no suitable jobs in their local area. However, 20.0 per cent of undergraduates stated that they were not fully utilising their skills or education because they were satisfied with their current job. Graduates employed part-time were more likely to state that they did not use their skills or education in their current job because they were engaging in further study with 24.2 per cent of all employed graduates stating this reason in comparison with 9.3 per cent of graduates employed full-time.

Table 11 Main reason for working in job in 2020 that doesn’t fully use skills and education, 2020 (%)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Employed full-time** | **Total employed** |
| Studying | 9.3 | 24.2 |
| I'm satisfied with my current job | 20.0 | 12.3 |
| Changing jobs / careers | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| Entry level job / career stepping stone | 2.8 | 1.4 |
| Caring for children or family member | 1.3 | 1.6 |
| **Subtotal – Personal factors** | 34.6 | 40.5 |
| No suitable jobs in my area of expertise | 20.1 | 19.5 |
| No suitable jobs in my local area | 14.1 | 13.1 |
| Considered to be too young by employers | 6.2 | 4.1 |
| Not enough work experience | 3.8 | 3.4 |
| No jobs with a suitable number of hours | 1.5 | 1.8 |
| Cannot find a job NFI | 2.3 | 2.7 |
| My job is temporary only / casual only | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| **Subtotal - Labour market factors** | 48.8 | 45.3 |
| Other  | 16.6 | 14.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

## 4. Further study

In 2020, four months after graduation, 18.5 per cent of undergraduates were engaged in further full-time study. This represents a slight decrease from 18.9 per cent in 2019, 19.4 per cent in 2018 and 20.7 per cent in 2017. As noted above, it will be important to monitor the proportion of undergraduates engaged in further full-time study in the future since previously, further study has been inversely related to economic and labour market conditions.

Both postgraduate coursework and postgraduate research graduates were much less likely than those who had completed an undergraduate program to move into further study after completing their qualification, at 6.7 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively.

Study areas with the highest proportion of undergraduates proceeding to full-time study in 2020 included Science and mathematics, 37.3 per cent, Psychology, 31.7 per cent, Veterinary science 26.8 per cent, Humanities, culture and social sciences, 25.1 per cent and Medicine 24.4 per cent. Undergraduates who had completed degrees in study areas with a strong vocational orientation tended, not surprisingly, to be less likely to proceed on to further full-time study in 2020. These included Nursing, 3.1 per cent, Rehabilitation, 3.1 per cent, and Teacher education, 7.7 per cent.

Table 12 Undergraduate further full-time study status in 2020, by original field of study[[4]](#footnote-4) (%)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Study area | In full-time study – Total |
| Science and mathematics | 37.3 |
| Computing and Information Systems | 11.3 |
| Engineering | 11.1 |
| Architecture and built environment | 17.2 |
| Agriculture and environmental studies | 15.2 |
| Health services and support | 21.3 |
| Medicine | 24.4 |
| Nursing | 3.1 |
| Pharmacy | 9.6 |
| Dentistry | 13.4 |
| Veterinary science | 26.8 |
| Rehabilitation | 3.1 |
| Teacher education | 7.7 |
| Business and management | 10.9 |
| Humanities, culture and social sciences | 25.1 |
| Social work | 8.9 |
| Psychology | 31.7 |
| Law and paralegal studies | 19.0 |
| Creative arts | 22.5 |
| Communications | 13.5 |
| Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation | 16.8 |
| All study areas\* | 18.5 |

In 2020, Health was the most popular area for further full-time study following an undergraduate degree, with 30.7 per cent of those proceeding to further study selecting this area.

Table 13 Study area of undergraduates in further full-time study in 2020 (%)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Field of education** | **Further study** |
| Natural and physical sciences | 11.9 |
| Information technology | 3.0 |
| Engineering and related technologies | 4.1 |
| Architecture and building | 2.5 |
| Agriculture, environmental and related studies | 1.5 |
| Health | 30.7 |
| Education | 9.2 |
| Management and commerce | 6.6 |
| Society and culture | 21.1 |
| Creative arts | 6.8 |
| Food, hospitality and personal services | 0.3 |
| Mixed field qualification | 1.8 |
| Other | 0.7 |
| **All fields** | 100.0 |

## 5. Satisfaction

### 5.1 Study level

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), administered since 1993, invites coursework graduates four months after completing their course to express agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale with statements about various aspects of their course that have been shown to influence student learning. Core questions cover teaching, generic skills and overall satisfaction.

Notwithstanding the downturn in undergraduate employment, undergraduates’ satisfaction with their studies increased across all measures in 2020. Overall satisfaction, as measured by one question in the CEQ increased slightly from 80.1 per cent to 80.7 per cent. Satisfaction with generic skills, increased from 82.4 per cent in 2019 to 82.9 per cent in 2020. Similarly, satisfaction with the quality of teaching increased from 63.7 per cent to 65.7 per cent.

Table 14 Undergraduate satisfaction, % agreement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019 | 2020 |
| Overall satisfaction | 80.1 | 80.7 |
| Good teaching scale | 63.7 | 65.7 |
| Generic skills scale | 82.4 | 82.9 |

Postgraduate coursework graduates are also invited to respond to the Course Experience Questionnaire to express satisfaction with key aspects of their course. Postgraduate coursework graduates expressed higher satisfaction across most areas in 2020 though overall satisfaction decreased slightly from 81.8 per cent to 81.7 per cent. Satisfaction with the quality of teaching increased from 69.4 per cent to 71.0 per cent while satisfaction with generic skills increased from 79.7 per cent to 80.7 per cent. As in previous years, postgraduate coursework graduates appear more satisfied than undergraduates with the quality of teaching and overall satisfaction. However, undergraduates report higher levels of satisfaction than postgraduate coursework graduates with their generic skills.

Table 15 Postgraduate coursework satisfaction, % agreement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019 | 2020 |
| Overall satisfaction | 81.8 | 81.7 |
| Good teaching scale | 69.4 | 71.0 |
| Generic skills scale | 79.7 | 80.7 |

The Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ), administered since 1999, invites postgraduate research graduates four months after completing their degree to express agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale with statements about various aspects of their degree. These include overall satisfaction, supervision, intellectual climate, skills development, infrastructure, thesis examination, goals and expectations and industry and external engagement.

Satisfaction with most aspects of the postgraduate research experience increased in 2020. 85.8 per cent of postgraduate research graduates expressed overall satisfaction with their degree, up slightly from 85.5 per cent in 2019. Satisfaction with the intellectual climate increased from 62.7 per cent to 64.4 per cent, satisfaction with infrastructure increased from 75.8 per cent to 76.8 per and satisfaction with thesis examination increased from 80.6 per cent to 81.5 per cent. Satisfaction with supervision decreased from 83.1 per cent to 82.3 per cent, as did satisfaction with goals and expectations which fell from 91.9 per cent to 91.3 per cent. There was no change in satisfaction with skills development holding steady at 92.5 per cent.

While satisfaction with industry and external engagement was lower than measured satisfaction with other aspects of the postgraduate research experience, as shown by Table 14, note the absolute level of satisfaction can be dependent on the number and type of items included in each scale. More important are trends and changes over time. Satisfaction with industry and external engagement increased from 56.4 per cent in 2019 to 57.9 per cent in 2020.

Table 16 Postgraduate research satisfaction, % agreement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019 | 2020 |
| Overall satisfaction | 85.5 | 85.8 |
| Supervision | 83.1 | 82.3 |
| Intellectual climate | 62.7 | 64.4 |
| Skills development | 92.5 | 92.5 |
| Infrastructure | 75.8 | 76.8 |
| Thesis examination | 80.6 | 81.5 |
| Goals and expectations | 91.9 | 91.3 |
| Industry and external engagement | 56.4 | 57.9 |

### 5.2 Time series

The CEQ time series collected through the precursor to the GOS, the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) shown in Table 17 indicates there had been improvement in undergraduate satisfaction over time (data are not shown prior to 2010 because of a prior change in survey methodology). In particular, satisfaction with the quality of teaching increased from 62.4 per cent in 2010 to 68.0 per cent in 2015. Overall satisfaction with courses has remained high, increasing from 81.2 per cent in 2010 to 83.4 per cent in 2015. Similarly, satisfaction with generic skills also remained high, increasing from 76.1 per cent in 2010 to 79.6 per cent in 2015.

The change in collection methodology and the way in which these scores are calculated in the GOS necessitate a break in time series between 2015 and 2016. Over the five years of the GOS, undergraduate ratings for overall satisfaction have been broadly steady at 80.6 per cent in 2016 and 80.7 per cent in 2020. Satisfaction with skills development has increased from 82.1 per cent in 2016 to 82.9 per cent and satisfaction with teaching has increased from 63.0 per cent in 2016 to 65.7 per cent in 2020.

Table 17 Undergraduate satisfaction 2010–2020, % agreement

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Overall satisfaction | 81.2 | 82.3 | 83.3 | 83.1 | 82.8 | 83.4 | 80.6 | 79.4 | 79.7 | 80.1 | 80.7 |
| Good teaching scale | 62.4 | 64.8 | 66.4 | 67.1 | 67.3 | 68.0 | 63.0 | 63.0 | 62.9 | 63.7 | 65.7 |
| Generic skills scale | 76.1 | 77.4 | 78.4 | 78.8 | 78.9 | 79.6 | 82.1 | 81.5 | 81.3 | 82.4 | 82.9 |

Similar trends are in evidence with postgraduate coursework graduate satisfaction. Satisfaction with the quality of teaching increased strongly over the period, from 64.8 per cent in 2010 to 70.2 per cent in 2015 as measured by the CEQ as part of the AGS, as shown by Table 18. Following the transition to the GOS, satisfaction with teaching increased from a base of 68.3 per cent in 2016 to 71.0 per cent in 2020.

Overall satisfaction with courses remained high increasing from 80.8 per cent in 2010 to 83.2 per cent in 2015. Following the transition to GOS, overall satisfaction has decreased slightly from 82.5 per cent in 2016 to 81.7 per cent in 2020.

Satisfaction with generic skills increased from 71.9 per cent in 2010 to 75.6 per cent in 2015 and has increased further again from 78.3 per cent in 2016 to 80.7 per cent in 2020 as shown by results in the GOS.

Table 18 Postgraduate coursework satisfaction, 2010–2020, % agreement

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Overall satisfaction | 80.8 | 82.1 | 83 | 83.1 | 83.5 | 83.2 | 82.5 | 81.9 | 81.7 | 81.8 | 81.7 |
| Good teaching scale | 64.8 | 66.8 | 68.9 | 69.1 | 70.1 | 70.2 | 68.3 | 69.0 | 68.7 | 69.4 | 71.0 |
| Generic skills scale | 71.9 | 73.2 | 74.5 | 74.6 | 75.2 | 75.6 | 78.3 | 78.3 | 78.4 | 79.7 | 80.7 |

The PREQ time series shown in Table 19 indicates there has been a steady improvement in satisfaction among postgraduate research graduates over time from 2007 to 2015 as measured by the AGS.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Overall satisfaction remained high, increasing from 85.7 per cent in 2007 to 87.7 per cent in 2015. Satisfaction with supervision improved over the same period from 76.6 per cent to 81.7 per cent. Similarly, satisfaction with the intellectual climate improved from 62.5 per cent in 2007 to 68.0 per cent in 2015.

The transition to the GOS resulted in a lowering of scores between 2015 and 2016, with the exception of skills development, which showed a slight increase of 0.5 percentage points. Since the change to the GOS, most of the scale scores have remained relatively stable. Overall satisfaction with the postgraduate research experience has increased slightly from 85.5 per cent in 2016 to 85.8 per cent in 2020. The largest changes in satisfaction have been recorded in the areas of Intellectual climate, rising 3.7 percentage points from 60.7 per cent in 2016 to 64.4 per cent in 2020, and Thesis examination, rising 3.6 percentage points from 77.9 per cent to 81.5 per cent over the same period. Notably, the only decrease in satisfaction has been in the area of Skill development, which declined by 1.6 percentage points from 94.1 per cent in 2016 to 92.5 per cent in 2020.

Table 19 PREQ 2007-2020, % agreement

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Overall Satisfaction | 85.7 | 85.5 | 85.2 | 84.8 | 86.2 | 86.2 | 86.7 | 86.8 | 87.7 | 85.5 | 84.4 | 85.0 | 85.5 | 85.8 |
| Supervision | 76.6 | 76.5 | 76.9 | 77.5 | 78.5 | 79.3 | 81.0 | 81.1 | 81.7 | 81.2 | 81.5 | 82.0 | 83.1 | 82.3 |
| Intellectual Climate | 62.5 | 63.1 | 63.1 | 63.8 | 65.0 | 65.7 | 67.8 | 67.5 | 68.0 | 60.7 | 61.3 | 61.1 | 62.7 | 64.4 |
| Skill Development | 91.6 | 93.1 | 92.5 | 92.7 | 93.1 | 93.9 | 93.6 | 93.7 | 93.6 | 94.1 | 94.3 | 92.6 | 92.5 | 92.5 |
| Infrastructure | 73.9 | 75.3 | 76.0 | 75.9 | 77.2 | 77.8 | 79.2 | 79.7 | 80.2 | 75.6 | 77.0 | 74.6 | 75.8 | 76.8 |
| Thesis Examination | 80.5 | 80.8 | 80.1 | 81.0 | 80.4 | 82.0 | 82.1 | 82.6 | 83.2 | 77.9 | 79.4 | 81.3 | 80.6 | 81.5 |
| Goals and Expectations | 91.9 | 91.7 | 91.9 | 92.7 | 92.3 | 92.9 | 93.3 | 93.7 | 93.4 | 91.2 | 91.5 | 91.7 | 91.9 | 91.3 |
| Industry Engagement |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 56.4 | 57.9 |

### 5.3 International benchmarking

International benchmarking of results from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) with a similar survey from overseas shows that, in general, Australian students are less satisfied with their higher education experience than their counterparts in the United Kingdom though the gap has narrowed in recent years, as shown in Table 20. However, it is important to be aware that differences in results across international surveys may stem from methodological differences and different student populations rather than genuine differences in student experience and satisfaction.

International benchmarking with the UK’s National Survey of Student Experience (NSS) shows student and graduate satisfaction was trending upwards in both the UK and Australia until 2015. Since then overall satisfaction has declined in the UK by 3 percentage points from 86 per cent in 2016 to 83 per cent in 2020. By way of comparison there has been a 0.1 percentage point increase in overall satisfaction in Australia over the same period so the gap in student satisfaction between Australia and the UK has narrowed in recent years from around five percentage points in 2016 down to two percentage points in 2020.

Table 20 Overall satisfaction of undergraduates, UK (NSS) and Australia (CEQ), 2008–2020, % agreement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CEQ** | **NSS** |
| 2008 |  | 82 |
| 2009 |  | 82 |
| 2010 | 81 | 82 |
| 2011 | 82 | 83 |
| 2012 | 83 | 85 |
| 2013 | 83 | 85 |
| 2014 | 82.8 | 86 |
| 2015 | 83.6 | 86 |
| 2016 | 80.6 | 86 |
| 2017 | 79.4 | 84 |
| 2018 | 79.7 | 83 |
| 2019 | 80.1 | 84 |
| 2020 | 80.7 | 83 |

### 5.4 Study area

One of the key factors influencing CEQ scores is study area. For example, in 2020, overall satisfaction among undergraduates ranged from a high of 88.2 per cent in Rehabilitation, 86.0 per cent in Humanities, culture and social sciences and 85.6 per cent in Social work down to 74.2 per cent in Computing and information systems, 75.3 per cent in Engineering, 76.2 per cent in Creative arts and 76.2 per cent in Architecture and built environment, as shown by Table 15. Similarly, for the good teaching scale, satisfaction ranged from 77.0 per cent in Humanities, culture and social sciences, down to 51.8 per cent in Engineering. For generic skills, satisfaction ranged from 88.6 per cent in Rehabilitation down to 77.4 per cent in Creative arts, 78.0 per cent for Computing and information systems and 78.8 per cent in Teacher education. The variation in satisfaction across institutions and study areas indicates there is scope for improvement in the interactions between institutions and their students.

Table 21 Undergraduate satisfaction by study area, 2019 and 2020, % agreement

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Study area | Overall satisfaction 2019 | Overall satisfaction 2020 | Good teaching scale 2019 | Good teaching scale 2020 | Generic skills scale 2019 | Generic skills scale 2019 |
| Science and mathematics | 84.0 | 84.1 | 67.5 | 70.3 | 85.7 | 86.7 |
| Computing and Information Systems | 72.9 | 74.2 | 57.0 | 58.1 | 77.6 | 78.0 |
| Engineering | 74.4 | 75.3 | 49.4 | 51.8 | 83.8 | 84.1 |
| Architecture and built environment | 74.5 | 76.2 | 63.3 | 65.6 | 78.0 | 80.6 |
| Agriculture and environmental studies | 84.2 | 83.3 | 71.0 | 69.9 | 86.4 | 85.0 |
| Health services and support | 81.3 | 82.4 | 66.9 | 69.2 | 84.4 | 85.1 |
| Medicine | 76.9 | 80.4 | 54.7 | 58.6 | 80.9 | 82.0 |
| Nursing | 78.8 | 79.5 | 60.1 | 61.5 | 82.6 | 83.7 |
| Pharmacy | 80.5 | 83.7 | 64.6 | 68.8 | 80.8 | 80.7 |
| Dentistry | 77.0 | 77.1 | 58.5 | 66.1 | 83.4 | 84.2 |
| Veterinary science | 82.0 | 83.9 | 57.8 | 61.6 | 83.7 | 84.9 |
| Rehabilitation | 89.4 | 88.2 | 72.5 | 75.6 | 88.2 | 88.6 |
| Teacher education | 78.6 | 78.3 | 60.8 | 62.4 | 78.2 | 78.8 |
| Business and management | 78.0 | 78.6 | 58.6 | 60.3 | 79.7 | 80.3 |
| Humanities, culture and social sciences | 85.4 | 86.0 | 75.7 | 77.0 | 84.9 | 84.2 |
| Social work | 85.6 | 85.6 | 69.8 | 73.8 | 86.3 | 87.6 |
| Psychology | 83.0 | 84.2 | 67.3 | 67.7 | 85.7 | 85.8 |
| Law and paralegal studies | 82.5 | 84.1 | 57.8 | 60.1 | 85.1 | 87.0 |
| Creative arts | 75.7 | 76.2 | 71.6 | 74.0 | 77.2 | 77.4 |
| Communications | 79.9 | 80.3 | 70.9 | 73.9 | 81.5 | 80.6 |
| Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation | 78.0 | 82.6 | 69.8 | 72.9 | 79.1 | 82.6 |
| All study areas | 80.1 | 80.7 | 63.7 | 65.7 | 82.4 | 82.9 |
| Standard Deviation | 4.3 | 3.9 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 3.3 | 3.2 |

1. 2009 to 2015 based on graduates aged less than 25 and in first full-time employment [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Where a graduate completes combined degrees across two study areas, their outcomes are included in both study areas. ‘All study areas’ figures count each graduate once only. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Where a graduate completes combined degrees across two study areas, their outcomes are included in both study areas. ‘All study areas’ figures count each graduate once only [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Where a graduate completes combined degrees across two study areas, their outcomes are included in both study areas. ‘All study areas’ figures count each graduate once only. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The change in methodology in the CEQ in 2010 was to label all responses in the Likert scale (whereas previously only the first and fifth responses had been labelled) and this was consistent with the approach taken in the PREQ since its inception in 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)