

May 2018 Graduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary Doctoral Graduates

This report summarizes the results for doctoral degree recipients participating in the May 2018 Graduate Future Plans Survey. A separate document summarizing the results for master's degree recipients is located [here](#).

Survey Methods

Doctoral and master's students who applied to graduate in Spring 2018 were invited to participate in the inaugural administration of the Graduate Future Plans Survey. The survey was administered in the weeks immediately before and after commencement, held on May 12. The online survey had an overall response rate of 69.3 percent, with 1,218 of the 1,758 graduates responding; 143 of the 193 doctoral students conferring a degree submitted the survey for a response rate of 74.1 percent.

Plans Following Graduation

Eighty-one percent of doctoral degree recipients said that at the time they completed the survey they had confirmed plans for employment in the year after graduation. One-fourth of doctoral graduates – including some who also indicated they had confirmed employment plans – indicated that they were seeking or planning to seek new employment or a change of employment. One doctoral graduate said they planned to return to graduate/professional school in the coming year to pursue another degree.

Post-Graduation Employment Among Those Accepting a Full-Time Position

Almost all doctoral graduates with confirmed plans for employment reported that they will be working full-time.

Respondents were asked what their employment plans would constitute, and were given the option to select multiple responses. Just over one-fourth of all doctoral graduates securing full-time employment said they will be working as a post-doctoral fellow, and 44 percent have accepted a non-postdoc position to begin after graduation. One-fourth indicated they will be continuing to work at a place of employment they obtained during their graduate program and 14 percent said they will be continuing at a place of employment they had prior to the start of their graduate program.

Among the doctoral graduates who said they will be working full-time in a position they accepted at the time of graduation or during the course of their graduate program:

- Eighty-six percent said they began looking for employment six or more months prior to graduation
- About half reported going on interviews for three or more different positions during their job search
- Forty percent indicated they had received more than one job offer from which to choose
- 42 percent said that an *NC State faculty member* had been helpful in their job search

Among doctoral graduates who said they will be continuing to work full-time at a place of employment they had obtained prior to or during their graduate program, one-third indicated they would be getting both a salary increase and a promotion/title change contingent upon receiving their degree. An additional one-fourth said they would be getting a salary increase without a promotion/title change.

Among all doctoral graduates who said they will be working full-time in the coming year, 31 percent said they will be working at a *U.S. four-year college or university* and an additional seven percent said they will be working for a *U.S. university-affiliated research institute*. Just over one-third reported that they will be working for a *private, for profit business or organization*. Eighty-seven percent of doctoral graduates indicated the position in which they will be working is “directly related” to their field of study.

Fifty-four percent of doctoral graduates who will be working full-time said they will be staying in North Carolina, with 42 percent working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The top employer of doctoral degree recipients was NC State University, employing one-fifth of all doctoral graduates who had secured full-time employment. Nine out of 21 doctoral graduates working at NC State said they will be working as a postdoctoral researcher.

NC State doctoral graduates securing full-time employment reported an average salary in the coming year of \$78,565 (median = \$72,500). Seventeen percent said they had received a signing bonus upon accepting their position, and of those indicating the amount, one-third said it was for \$15,000 or more. In addition, a small number of doctoral graduates reported receiving company shares as part of their job offer. Six respondents specified that the estimated value of the company shares was for \$30,000 or less at the time of the offer and three indicated the shares were valued at \$50,000 or more. Just under half of those who said they will be working outside of North Carolina reported that they had received an offer for a relocation package.

Graduates Seeking Employment

As noted above, one-fourth of doctoral degree recipients said they were seeking or planning to seek employment. Close to 70 percent of these graduates indicated at the time of the survey that they were unemployed, with the remaining 30 percent having some type of full- or part-time employment following graduation, but looking or planning to look for a new position.

Fifty-five percent of doctoral graduates who at the time of the survey said they were actively seeking employment or a change of employment reported beginning their search six or more months prior to graduation. Eighty-four percent indicated they had gone on an interview for at least one position during their most recent job search, with just under half having gone on interviews for three or more different positions.

About half of doctoral graduates looking for a position said they had received at least one job offer, with about one-fifth saying they had received two or more job offers. The large majority of doctoral graduates who reported receiving at least one job offer indicated at the time of the survey that *they were in the process of negotiation with one or more specific organizations*.

NC State Professional Development Experiences and Resources

Two-thirds of all doctoral graduates submitting the May 2018 Graduate Future Plans Survey indicated they had a *research assistantship* during the course of their graduate program and over half said they had a *teaching assistantship*. Forty-three percent of doctoral graduates said they participated in *research outside of an assistantship that was not published or presented* and over one-fourth had an *internship* or engaged in *volunteer work* while pursuing their degree.

Employment in one's field of study, along with *research assistantships* and participation in *research outside of an assistantship that was not published or presented*, were more likely than other types of work-related experiences to be viewed by those who had such experiences as “very helpful” in securing their job offer.

Sixty percent of doctoral graduates reported *publishing at least one article or creative work in a peer-reviewed journal* while pursuing their degree, and one-fourth said they had produced five or more publications over the course of their graduate program. In addition, 68 percent of doctoral graduates reported *publishing at least one research paper, poster, or creative work at a conference in their field*, and one-fourth said they had presented four or more times.

About 30 percent of doctoral graduates said they had gone to a career services office on campus at least once, with one-fourth going to NC State's Career Development Center. The vast majority of those who had gone to a campus or college career services office gave very favorable ratings of the services they provided.

Over one-third of doctoral graduates indicated *attending a career fair*, either on-campus or off-campus and about 30 percent said they had *attended presentations on resume writing, interviewing, and other skills* and/or used *ePACK*, the NC State Career Development Center's job posting website.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, 57 percent of doctoral graduates said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the career guidance they had received. Thirty-six percent said they felt “neutral” about the career guidance they were provided and seven percent said they were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.”

Feelings about the Future

When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their future plans, about two-thirds of doctoral graduates said they were “very excited” about what they will be doing, and just four percent said that they were “not very excited” or “not at all excited.” Ninety-seven percent of doctoral graduates indicated they feel “very prepared” (65%) or “somewhat prepared” (32%) for their future career paths.

For more information about the Graduate Future Plans Survey contact:

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