

December 2018 Graduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary Doctoral Graduates

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

Survey Methods

Doctoral and master's students who applied to graduate in December 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 December 19. The online survey had an overall response rate of 64.2 percent, with 615 of the 958 graduates responding; 109 of the 176 doctoral students conferring a degree submitted the survey for a response rate of 61.9 percent.

Plans Following Graduation

Seventy-nine 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-fifth of doctoral graduates – including some who also indicated they had confirmed employment plans – said that they were seeking or planning to seek new employment or a change of employment. About seven percent of doctoral graduates reported that they had “other” plans (e.g., traveling, spending time with family).

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

All doctoral graduates with confirmed plans for employment reported that they will be working full-time. Over half of doctoral graduates who will be working full-time said that they will be starting a new position at a new place of employment. Thirty-one percent indicated they will be continuing to work at a place of employment they obtained during their graduate program and 13 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 for which they began working during the course of their graduate program:

- Sixty-two percent said they began looking for employment six or more months prior to graduation
- Fifty-eight percent reported going on interviews for two or more different positions during their job search
- One-third said they had received more than one job offer from which to choose
- Two-thirds indicated receiving the offer for the position they finally accepted three or more months prior to graduation
- Forty percent said that an *NC State faculty member* had been helpful in their job search

Sixty percent of 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 indicated they would receive a salary increase and/or a promotion/title change contingent upon receiving their degree. Forty-three percent indicated they would be getting both a salary increase and a promotion/title change, while 14 percent said they would be getting only a salary increase. An additional three percent said they would be getting only a promotion/title change and would not receive an increase in their salary.

Among all doctoral graduates who said they will be working full-time in the coming year, 30 percent indicated they will be working at either a *U.S. four-year college or university* (28%) or at a *U.S. medical school* (2%). An additional five percent said they will be working for a *U.S. university-affiliated research institute* and another five percent will be working at a *U.S. community or two-year college*. Twenty-nine percent of doctoral graduates reported that they will be working for a *private, for profit business or organization*. Eighty-one percent of doctoral graduates indicated the position in which they will be working is “directly related” to their field of study.

Forty-six percent of doctoral graduates who will be working full-time said they will be staying in North Carolina, with one-third working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The top employer of doctoral degree recipients was NC State University, employing 12 percent of all doctoral graduates who had secured full-time employment. Eight out of the nine 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 \$79,699 (median = \$72,500). Sixteen percent said they had received a signing bonus upon accepting their position, and of those indicating the amount, about half said it was for \$20,000 or more. In addition, 13 percent of doctoral graduates reported receiving company shares as part of their job offer. Four of the eight respondents providing an estimated value said the value of the shares was for \$100,000 or more at the time of they accepted the position. Over 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-fifth of doctoral degree recipients (n=19) said they were seeking or planning to seek employment. While the majority of these graduates indicated at the time of the survey that they were unemployed, a small number (n=3) reported having some type of full- or part-time employment, but were looking or planning to look for a new position.

Half of doctoral graduates (n=10) 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. Three-fourths (n=14) indicated they had gone on an interview for one position during their most recent job search and one doctoral graduate said they had interviewed for two positions.

Sixteen percent of doctoral graduates (n=3) looking for a position said they had received at least one job offer. When asked to indicate why the job offer(s) they had received had not

worked out, two doctoral graduates who reported receiving at least one job offer indicated that at the time of the survey *they were in the process of negotiation*.

NC State Professional Development Experiences and Resources

Seventy-eight percent of all doctoral graduates submitting the December 2018 Graduate Future Plans Survey indicated they had had a *research assistantship* during the course of their graduate program and 60 percent said they had had a *teaching assistantship*. Forty percent of doctoral graduates said they participated in *research outside of an assistantship that was not published or presented* and over one-fourth had had an *internship*.

Research outside of an assistantship that was not published or presented, along with *research assistantships* and *having a job in one's field of study*, 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.

Two-thirds of doctoral graduates reported *publishing at least one article or creative work in a peer-reviewed journal* while pursuing their degree, and one-fifth said they had produced five or more publications over the course of their graduate program. In addition, 72 percent of doctoral graduates reported presenting *at least one research paper, poster, or creative work at a conference in their field*, and 38 percent said they had presented five or more times.

Thirty-one percent of doctoral graduates said they had gone to a career services office on campus at least once, with 19 percent 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.

About one-third of doctoral graduates indicated *attending a career fair*, either on-campus or off-campus and/or said they had *attended presentations on resume writing, interviewing, and other skills*.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, 60 percent of doctoral graduates said they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the career guidance they had received.

Feelings about the Future

When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their future plans, just under 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." Almost all of the doctoral graduates indicated they feel "very prepared" (60%) or "somewhat prepared" (36%) for their future career paths.

For more information about the Graduate Future Plans Survey contact:

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