

December 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary Doctoral Graduates

This report summarizes the results for doctoral degree recipients participating in the December 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey. A separate document summarizing the results for master's degree recipients is located on the [ISA website](#).

Survey Methods

Doctoral and master's students who applied to graduate in Fall 2019 were invited to participate in the semiannual 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 59.3 percent, with 587 of the 990 graduates responding; 119 of the 195 doctoral students conferring a degree submitted the survey for a response rate of 61 percent.

Plans Following Graduation

Eighty-two 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. Eighteen percent 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. Four 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. Forty-three percent said that they will be starting a new position at a new place of employment. Forty-eight percent indicated they will be continuing to work at a place of employment they started during their graduate program and 8 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-nine percent said they began looking for employment six or more months prior to graduation
- Fifty-eight percent reported going on interviews for three or more different positions during their job search
- Half said they had received more than one job offer from which to choose
- Fifty-eight percent indicated receiving the offer for the position they finally accepted three or more months prior to graduation
- Over one-third said that an *NC State faculty member* had been helpful in their job search

Forty-six percent of doctoral graduates who said they will be continuing to work full-time at a place of employment they had started 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. One-fourth indicated they would be getting both a salary increase and a promotion/title change and an additional 17 percent said they would be getting only a salary increase.

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* (27.1%) or at a *U.S. medical school* (3.1%). An additional six percent said they will be working for a *U.S. university-affiliated research institute* and one percent will be working at a *U.S. community or two-year college*. Forty-two percent of doctoral graduates reported that they will be working for a *private, for profit business or organization*. Three-fourths of doctoral graduates indicated the position in which they will be working is “directly related” to their field of study. Nine in ten doctoral graduates said they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the job in which they will be working after graduation.

Just under half of doctoral graduates who will be working full-time said they will be staying in North Carolina, with 41 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 fourteen of the doctoral graduates submitting the survey who had secured full-time employment.

NC State doctoral graduates securing full-time employment reported an average salary in the coming year of \$83,287 (median = \$77,500). Eighteen percent said they had received a signing bonus upon accepting their position, and of those indicating the amount, 77 percent said it was for \$10,000 or more. In addition, sixteen percent of doctoral graduates reported receiving company shares as part of their job offer. Four of the eleven 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. Close to three-fourths 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, seventeen percent of doctoral degree recipients (n=20) submitting the survey said they were seeking or planning to seek employment. Three of these graduates reported being employed full-time while pursuing or planning to pursue new employment in the year following graduation.

Just under 60 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 less than six months prior to graduation. Ninety-four percent indicated they had gone on an interview for at least one position during their most recent job search and one-third said they had interviewed for three or more positions. Twenty-eight percent of doctoral graduates looking for a position said they had received at least one job offer.

NC State Professional Development Experiences and Resources

Seventy-nine percent of all doctoral graduates submitting the December 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey indicated they had had a *research assistantship* during the course of their

graduate program and 62 percent said they had had a *teaching assistantship*. Having a research assistantship was more likely than having a teaching assistantship to be reported to be “very helpful” in securing a job offer (65.2% vs. 13.9%). Thirty-nine percent of doctoral graduates said they had participated in *research outside of an assistantship that was not published or presented*, and two-thirds of these found it “very helpful” in securing employment (64.4%). Seven of the ten doctoral graduates having had a co-op said the experience was “very helpful” in securing a job offer. An *externship* and/or *internship* were also highly likely to be viewed by those who had such experiences as “very helpful” in securing their job offer (66.7% and 60.5%, respectively). Two-thirds of doctoral degree recipients also indicated that *other unpublished and unrepresented research, conducted either independently or with faculty or peers*, was very helpful in securing employment (64.4%).

Eighty percent of doctoral graduates reported presenting *at least one research paper, poster, or creative work at a conference in their field*, and 37 percent said they had presented five or more times. In addition, 67 percent of doctoral graduates reported *publishing at least one article or creative work in a peer-reviewed journal* while pursuing their degree and 22 percent said they had produced five or more publications over the course of their graduate program (21.6%).

Thirty-five percent of doctoral graduates said they had gone to a career services office on campus at least once, with 28 percent of them 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.

Thirty-eight percent of doctoral graduates indicated *attending a career fair*, either on-campus or off-campus. In addition, 33 percent said they had *attended presentations on resume writing, interviewing, and other skills*. Thirty-one percent used ePACK, the Career Development Center’s online tool for connecting NC State students with potential employers.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, 86 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, over two-thirds of doctoral graduates said they were “very excited” about what they will be doing, and just one doctoral graduate said that they were “not at all excited.” Almost all of the doctoral graduates indicated they feel “very prepared” (61.7%) or “somewhat prepared” (33.0%) for their future career paths.

For more information about the Graduate Future Plans Survey contact:

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