

## **December 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary Master's Graduates**

*This report summarizes the results for master's degree recipients participating in the December 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey. A separate document summarizing the results for doctoral 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 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; 468 of the 795 master's students conferring a degree submitted the survey for a response rate of 58.9 percent.

### **Plans Following Graduation**

Seventy-two percent of master's degree recipients said that at the time they completed the survey they had confirmed plans for employment in the year after graduation. Twenty-two percent of master's 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. Sixteen percent of master's graduates 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 master's graduates with confirmed plans for employment reported that they will be working full-time. Twenty-six percent of master's graduates who will be working full-time said that they will be starting a new position at a new place of employment. Forty-six percent indicated they will be continuing to work at a place of employment they obtained during their graduate program and twenty-eight percent said they will be continuing at a place of employment they had prior to the start of their graduate program.

Among the master's graduates who said they will be working full-time in a position they accepted to begin after graduation or for which they began working during the course of their graduate program:

- Sixty-four percent said they began looking for employment six or more months prior to graduation
- Almost half reported going on interviews for three or more different positions during their job search, with five percent going on interviews for more than ten positions
- Forty-five percent 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 *an internship/externship* was helpful in obtaining their job (the resource most commonly selected as helpful in the job search, closely followed by LinkedIn)

One third of master's 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-fifth indicated they would be getting both a salary increase and a promotion/title change, while 12 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 master's graduates who had confirmed plans to work full-time in the coming year, two thirds said they will be working for a *private, for profit business or organization*. Eighteen percent said they will be working in the education sector. Just over three-fourths of master's graduates indicated the position in which they will be working is "directly related" to their field of study, and ninety percent indicated they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their position.

Over half of master's graduates who will be working full-time said they will be staying in North Carolina, with 38 percent working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The top employers of master's degree recipients were Amazon, the Wake County Public School System, and NC State University.

NC State master's graduates securing full-time employment reported an average salary in the coming year of \$87,760 (median = \$87,500). One-third said they had received a signing bonus upon accepting their position, and of those indicating the amount, over half said it was for \$10,000 or more. In addition, 28 percent of master's graduates reported receiving company shares as part of their job offer; over half of those specified that the estimated value of the company shares was for \$70,000 or more at the time of they accepted the position. Sixty-four percent of those who said they will be working outside of North Carolina indicated they had received an offer for a relocation package.

## **Graduates Seeking Employment**

As noted above, at the time they completed the survey, 22 percent of master's degree recipients said they were seeking or planning to seek employment. While the majority of these graduates indicated that they were unemployed, 24 percent reported having some type of full- or part-time employment and were looking or planning to look for a new position.

About three-fourths of master's graduates who at the time of the survey said they were actively seeking employment or a change of employment indicated beginning their search less than six months prior to graduation. Eighty percent indicated they had gone on an interview for at least one position during their most recent job search, with one-third going on interviews for three or more different positions.

Twenty-seven percent of master's graduates looking for a position said they had received at least one job offer, with eight percent saying they had received two or more job offers. Many master's 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*.

## Further Education

Seventeen percent of the 468 master's graduates who submitted the December 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey said they were planning to continue their education in pursuit of another degree. One-half of them said at the time of the survey that *they are already enrolled and are pursuing the degree* and an additional four percent indicated *they have been accepted and know where they will be going*. Five percent *have been accepted but are still undecided on whether or not or where they will actually attend*. Twelve percent *have applied, but have not yet been accepted*. Finally, 28 percent said *they had not applied, but plan to do so in the coming year*.

Among the master's degree recipients who at the time of the survey were enrolled in another graduate program or who had been accepted and knew where they will be going:

- Ninety percent are staying in North Carolina, with 82 percent staying at NC State University
- Eighty-eight percent will be enrolled in a PhD program
- Eighty percent have received funding and/or awards they will use while pursuing their next degree

## NC State Professional Development Experiences and Resources

Forty percent of all master's graduates indicated they had had an *internship* during the course of their graduate program and one-fourth held a job in their field of study concurrently while earning their degree.

Among respondents who said they had obtained employment or were seeking employment, seventy-two percent of master's graduates who said they had had an *internship* rated the experience as "very helpful" in securing a job offer. Similarly, half or more of master's graduates having had a *co-op* or a *job in their field of study* rated the experience(s) they had as "very helpful" in their job search.

Seven percent of master's graduates said they had *published at least one article or creative work in a peer-reviewed journal* while pursuing their degree and 19 percent of master's graduates said they had *presented at least one research paper, poster, or creative work at a conference in their field*.

Forty-six percent of master's graduates said they had gone to a career services office on campus at least once, with 37 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.

Forty-two percent of master's graduates said they had used *ePACK*, the NC State Career Development Center's job posting website, and 38 percent said they had *attended a career fair*.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the career guidance they received from their academic department/college, just under two-thirds of master's graduates said they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the career guidance they had received. Just seven percent of respondents were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".

## **Feelings about the Future**

When asked which statement comes closest to how they were feeling about their future plans, 72 percent of master's graduates said they were "very excited" about what they will be doing, and just two percent said that they were "not very excited" or "not at all excited." Ninety-nine percent of master's graduates indicated they feel "very prepared" (62.2%) or "somewhat prepared" (36.5%) for their future career paths.

### **For more information about the Graduate Future Plans Survey contact:**

Hannah McQueen, Assistant Director for Survey Research  
Institutional Strategy and Analysis  
Box 7002  
NC State University  
Phone: (919) 515-6438  
Email: [hmmcquee@ncsu.edu](mailto:hmmcquee@ncsu.edu)

Posted: August, 2020