

## **May 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary Doctoral Graduates**

*This report summarizes the results for doctoral degree recipients participating in the May 2019 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 Spring 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 May 11. The online survey had an overall response rate of 66.2 percent, with 1,240 of the 1,874 graduates responding; 152 of the 217 doctoral students conferring a degree submitted the survey for a response rate of 70 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 – said that they were seeking or planning to seek new employment or a change of employment. About three 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 of doctoral graduates who will be working full-time said that they will be starting a new position at a new place of employment. Forty percent indicated they will be continuing to work at a place of employment they obtained during their graduate program and 16 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:

- Eighty percent said they began looking for employment six or more months prior to graduation
- Forty-three percent reported going on interviews for three or more different positions during their job search
- Thirty-seven percent said they had received more than one job offer from which to choose
- Three-fourths indicated receiving the offer for the position they finally accepted three or more months prior to graduation
- Close to half 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 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. Twenty-two percent indicated they would be getting both a salary increase and a promotion/title change and an additional 22 percent said they would be getting only a salary increase. One doctoral graduate 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, 35 percent indicated they will be working at either a *U.S. four-year college or university* (32%) or at a *U.S. medical school* (3%). An additional five percent said they will be working for a *U.S. university-affiliated research institute* and seven percent will be working at a *U.S. community or two-year college*. Thirty percent of doctoral graduates reported that they will be working for a *private, for profit business or organization*. Eighty-eight percent of doctoral graduates indicated the position in which they will be working is “directly related” to their field of study.

Half of doctoral graduates who will be working full-time said they will be staying in North Carolina, with 36 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 eight percent of all doctoral graduates who had secured full-time employment. Seven out of the 13 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 \$82,119 (median = \$77,500). Fourteen percent said they had received a signing bonus upon accepting their position, and of those indicating the amount, about half said it was for \$10,000 or more. In addition, ten percent of doctoral graduates reported receiving company shares as part of their job offer. Three of the seven 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 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 (n=37) 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, one-fifth reported having some type of full- or part-time employment and were looking or planning to look for a new position.

Forty 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. Sixty-nine 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.

Fourteen percent of doctoral graduates 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, four of the five 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

About two-thirds of all doctoral graduates submitting the May 2019 Graduate Future Plans Survey indicated they had had a *research assistantship* during the course of their graduate program and 63 percent said they had had a *teaching assistantship*. Forty-two percent of doctoral graduates said they had participated in *research outside of an assistantship that was not published or presented* and over one-fourth had had an *internship*.

Three-fourths of the small number of doctoral graduates having had a co-op (n=8) said the experience was “very helpful” in securing a job offer. Similarly, *having a job in one’s field of study* (73%) and *research assistantships* (66%) were also 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.

Fifty-nine percent 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, 73 percent of doctoral graduates reported presenting *at least one research paper, poster, or creative work at a conference in their field*, and one-third said they had presented five or more times.

Twenty-seven percent of doctoral graduates said they had gone to a career services office on campus at least once, with 18 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.

One-third of doctoral graduates indicated *attending a career fair*, either on-campus or off-campus. In addition, one-fourth said they had used *ePACK*, the Career Development Center’s online tool for connecting NC State students with potential employers, and/or *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, almost two-thirds 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 three-fourths of doctoral graduates said they were “very excited” about what they will be doing, and just one doctoral graduate said that they were “not very excited.” Almost all of the doctoral graduates indicated they feel “very prepared” (68%) or “somewhat prepared” (28%) for their future career paths.

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

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