

## **May 2020 Graduate Future Plans Survey Executive Summary Master's Graduates**

*This report summarizes the results for master's degree recipients participating in the May 2020 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 May 2020 were invited to participate in the semiannual Graduate Future Plans Survey. Because of COVID-19, there was no formal commencement ceremony; instead, the final population used in analysis consists of those graduate students who had completed the application to graduate by May 7 and who were conferred degrees. The online survey had an overall response rate of 69.1 percent, with 1,228 of the 1,776 graduates responding; 1,082 of the 1,584 master's students who were conferred a degree submitted the survey for a response rate of 68.3 percent.

### **Plans Following Graduation**

Fifty-four percent of master's degree recipients said at the time they completed the survey they had confirmed plans for employment in the year after graduation. Thirty percent of all master's graduates said that their primary plan was to seek new employment in the year after graduation, and just over one-third of those who had confirmed employment indicated they were also planning to seek new employment opportunities. Thirteen percent of master's students 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**

Ninety-eight percent of all master's graduates with confirmed plans for employment reported that they will be working full-time. Forty-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. Thirty-one percent indicated they will be continuing to work at a place of employment they obtained during their graduate program and 23 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:

- Fifty-four percent said they began looking for employment six or more months prior to graduation
- Seventy-one percent reported going on interviews for three or more different positions during their job search, with almost one in five master's graduates going on interviews for more than ten positions
- About half said they had received more than one job offer from which to choose

- Just over half indicated receiving the offer for the position they finally accepted three or more months prior to graduation
- Thirty-seven percent said that *on-campus interviewing* had been helpful in obtaining their job (the resource most commonly selected as helpful in the job search, followed by LinkedIn)

Half 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 in five indicated they would be getting both a salary increase and a promotion/title change, while 23 percent said they would be getting only a salary increase. An additional seven 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*. Sixteen percent said they will be working in the education sector. Eighty percent of master's graduates indicated the position in which they will be working is "directly related" to their field of study, and 89 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 43 percent working in the Research Triangle area (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill). The top employers of master's degree recipients were Amazon (27 master's graduates), the Wake County Public School System (14 master's graduates), and Deloitte and Ernst & Young (11 master's graduates each).

NC State master's graduates securing full-time employment reported an average salary in the coming year of \$83,877 (median = \$82,500). Over 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, 17 percent of master's graduates reported receiving company shares as part of their job offer; 45 percent of those specified that the estimated value of the company shares was for \$50,000 or more at the time of they accepted the position. Fifty-seven 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, 30 percent of master's degree recipients said their primary post-graduation plan was to seek employment. In addition, 35 percent of those graduates returning to a job held before or continuing a job started while pursuing their master's degree reported planning to pursue new employment in the year following graduation.

Seventy percent 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. Two-thirds 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.

Fourteen percent of master's graduates looking for a position said they had received at least one job offer, with three 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 considering one or more offers*.

## Further Education

Thirteen percent of the 1,082 master's graduates who submitted the May 2020 Graduate Future Plans Survey said they were planning to continue their education in pursuit of another degree. Thirty-eight percent of them said at the time of the survey that *they are already enrolled and are pursuing the degree* and an additional 32 percent indicated *they have been accepted and know where they will be going*. Three percent *have been accepted but are still undecided on whether or not or where they will actually attend*. Eight percent *have applied, but have not yet been accepted*. Finally, 19 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-two percent are attending their first-choice school
- Three-fourths are staying in North Carolina, with 65 percent staying at NC State University
- Eighty-four percent will be enrolled in a PhD program
- Most 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 just under 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, 65 percent of master's graduates who said they had had a *job in their field of study* rated the experience as "very helpful" in securing a job offer (65.4%). Similarly, half or more of master's graduates who had had a *co-op, internship, or a student teaching experience* rated the experience(s) as "very helpful" in their job search.

Five 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 11 percent of master's graduates said they had *presented at least one research paper, poster, or creative work at a conference in their field*.

The Career Development Center was the career services office most frequented by master's graduates, with 35 percent reporting using the Center at least once during their graduate studies. Ten percent of master's graduates reported using the Institute for Advanced Analytics' Career Services; the vast majority of these were data analytics students. 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 40 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, two-thirds of master's graduates said they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the career guidance they had received. Just four 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, 97 percent of master's graduates said they were "very excited" or "excited" about what they will be doing, and just three percent said that they were "not very excited" or "not at all excited." Ninety-six percent of master's graduates indicated they feel "very prepared" (59.8%) or "somewhat prepared" (36.3%) for their future career paths.

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