

May 2022 Graduate Future Plans Survey Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This report provides an overview of the research methods and response rates for the Graduate Future Plans Survey (GFPS) at NC State University. The GFPS is designed to collect specific information on master's and doctoral degree earners' plans following graduation, including detailed information on employment, further graduate/professional school attendance, and participation in career-preparation activities while at NC State. Results from the survey can be found on the [Institutional Strategy and Analysis \(ISA\)](#) website.

Research Design

The May GFPS is administered at the end of each spring. In preparing the surveys for online administration, ISA identifies the survey population, notifies and coordinates with survey contacts in each academic unit regarding promotional activities to encourage participation, and develops and sends email invitations and reminders. After data collection ends, ISA analyzes the data and distributes reports on the results.

The online survey goes live about two weeks prior to commencement and is scheduled to close two weeks after graduation. The May 2022 GFPS was in the field from April 28 through June 1, with commencement being held on May 7.

On April 28, all doctoral and master's students who as of that day had applied to graduate were sent an email from their college Dean (or equivalent) inviting them to participate in the survey. The first follow-up reminder email was sent to non-respondents from their college Associate Dean or equivalent on May 3. On May 6, the second reminder email for graduate students in a college without its own career services office came from the Executive Director of the Career Development Center. If their college did have such an office, the second reminder came from the director of the student's college career services office. The final three reminders came from the Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis on May 23, May 26, and June 1. On each of the days that reminders were sent to non-respondents, invitations were emailed to those who had applied to graduate during the intervening period. Drafts of the invitation and five follow-up emails are available in Appendix A.

In addition to the invitation and follow-up emails, ISA engaged in additional promotional activities to boost response rates. Various administrators in the colleges and departments (e.g., Associate Deans for Graduate Programs, College and Department Coordinators for Advising) were encouraged to contact their students directly and remind them about the survey. A flyer and QR code were distributed to survey contacts in each department, who were encouraged to incorporate them into communications with their graduating master's and doctoral students. Some students, therefore, might have received additional requests to participate in the survey via email, flyer, and/or other graduation-related communications.

Students were offered incentives in order to encourage participation in the survey. Two respondents who submitted the survey by the final deadline of June 1 were randomly selected to each receive a \$50 Amazon eGift Card.

Response Rates

The final May 2022 GFPS population consists of the 1,617 master’s students (n=1,412) and doctoral students (n=205) who had applied to graduate in spring 2022 and were conferred degrees as of June 27, 2022. ¹ Of these students, 961 participated in the Graduate Future Plans Survey for an overall response rate of 59.4 percent. Participation in the survey was slightly lower among master’s students (59.1%) compared to doctoral students (62.0%).

Table 1: Response Rate, by Degree Received

Degree	May 2022 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
Doctoral	205	12.7%	127	13.2%	62.0%
Master’s	1,412	87.3%	834	86.8%	59.1%
Total	1,617	100.0%	961	100.0%	59.4%

Participation rates for the survey varied by college/school. In looking at master’s and doctoral programs combined (Table 2), the Institute for Advanced Analytics (a master’s only program) had the highest overall response rate; all graduates from IAA completed the survey in May 2022 (100%). The College of Design and the College of Veterinary Medicine also had high response rates relative to other colleges. Three in four graduates from each of these colleges completed the GFPS (75%). The College of Sciences and Poole College of Management had the lowest response rates, with 45 percent and 48 percent, of their respective graduates completing the GFPS (45.0% and 47.6% respectively). The remaining colleges all had response rates that fell between 54 and 66 percent.

Tables 3 and 4 provide response rates by college, separately, for master’s and doctoral degree earners.

¹ The survey population includes doctoral and master’s degree recipients only. Students earning a DVM or a DVM/PhD are not included.

Table 2: Response Rate, by College (All respondents)

College/School	May 2022 Graduating Class		May 2022 Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Population	N	% of Survey Respondents	%
Institute for Advanced Analytics	115	7.1%	115	12.0%	100.0%
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	150	9.3%	98	10.2%	65.3%
College of Design	59	3.6%	44	4.6%	74.6%
College of Education	270	16.7%	153	15.9%	56.7%
College of Engineering	343	21.2%	199	20.7%	58.0%
College of Natural Resources	66	4.1%	36	3.7%	54.5%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	251	15.5%	138	14.4%	55.0%
College of Sciences	111	6.9%	50	5.2%	45.0%
Wilson College of Textiles	38	2.4%	24	2.5%	63.2%
College of Veterinary Medicine	8	0.5%	6	0.6%	75.0%
Poole College of Management	206	12.7%	98	10.2%	47.6%
Total	1,617	100.0%	961	100.0%	59.4%

*Doctoral and master's degree recipients only. DVM and DVM/PhD students are not included in the GFPS survey population.

Table 3: Response Rate, by College (Master's Degree Recipients)

College/School	May 2022 Graduating Class		May 2022 Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Population	N	% of Survey Respondents	%
Institute for Advanced Analytics	115	8.1%	115	13.8%	100.0%
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	130	9.2%	79	9.5%	60.8%
College of Design	56	4.0%	41	4.9%	73.2%
College of Education	242	17.1%	130	15.6%	53.7%
College of Engineering	278	19.7%	167	20.0%	60.1%
College of Natural Resources	53	3.8%	28	3.4%	52.8%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	236	16.7%	128	15.3%	54.2%
College of Sciences	65	4.6%	29	3.5%	44.6%
Wilson College of Textiles	30	2.1%	19	2.3%	63.3%
College of Veterinary Medicine	2	0.1%	1	0.1%	50.0%
Poole College of Management	205	14.5%	97	11.6%	47.3%
Total	1,412	100.0%	834	100.0%	59.1%

Table 4: Response Rate, by College (Doctoral Degree Recipients)

College/School	May 2022 Graduating Class		May 2022 Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Population	N	% of Survey Respondents	%
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	20	9.8%	19	15.0%	95.0%
College of Design	3	1.5%	3	2.4%	100.0%
College of Education	28	13.7%	23	18.1%	82.1%
College of Engineering	65	31.7%	32	25.2%	49.2%
College of Natural Resources	13	6.3%	8	6.3%	61.5%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	15	7.3%	10	7.9%	66.7%
College of Sciences	46	22.4%	21	16.5%	45.7%
Wilson College of Textiles	8	3.9%	5	3.9%	62.5%
College of Veterinary Medicine	6	2.9%	5	3.9%	83.3%
Poole College of Management	1	0.5%	1	0.8%	100.0%
Total	205	100.0%	127	100.0%	62.0%

Prepared by: Hannah McQueen, Assistant Director for Survey Research

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

Institutional Strategy and Analysis

Campus Box 7002

NC State University

Email: studentsurveys@ncsu.edu

May 2022 Graduate Future Plans Survey Appendix A: Email Invitation and Follow-Up Reminders

Email Invitation (April 28, 2022)

To: All May 2022 graduate students who have submitted the online application for degree form
From: "NC State [College]" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject: "Graduate Future Plans Survey – What's next?"

Dear [First name],

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation from NC State! As [Dean] of the [College], I am interested in knowing what is next in store for you. Perhaps you have accepted a new job, already have one, or are currently searching. Maybe you are continuing in graduate or professional school to pursue another degree, or maybe you are following other dreams. Whatever your plans may be, we would like to hear about them.

Please take 10-15 minutes of your time to complete the Graduate Future Plans Survey. You can access it online at:
go.ncsu.edu/grad.future.plans
(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

As a show of our appreciation for your time, two respondents who complete the survey by the June 1 deadline will be randomly selected to each win a \$50 Amazon eGift card, sent via email.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Systematically collecting this information through this brief survey is the best way we have to learn what our graduate students will be doing after earning their degree. The aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State graduate students, with current graduate students who are planning their future paths, and even with employers when making salary offers to our graduate students. *Be assured that your responses are confidential – it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in reports of results.*

Remember, as an NC State alumnus/alumna, the Career Development Center will continue to provide services to you for one year after graduation. Please visit careers.dasa.ncsu.edu for more information.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the activities of our recent graduates. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Institutional Strategy and Analysis at studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
[College Dean Name]
[Dean Title, College Name]
NC State University

First Follow-Up Email (May 3, 2022)

To: GFPS non-respondents
From: "NC State [College]" <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject: "Graduate Future Plans Survey – Please share your experiences"

Dear [First name],

About a week ago, the Dean emailed to ask you to take just a few minutes of your time to let us know about your plans following the completion of your graduate degree. As [ADAA title] of the [College], I am interested in knowing what is next in store for you. Your responses to this survey enable us to help current and future graduate students and give us the opportunity to showcase the myriad of activities in which our graduates engage.

As of 9 a.m. today, we have not yet heard from you. We ask that you please take 10-15 minutes of your time now to complete the Graduate Future Plans Survey, available at: go.ncsu.edu/grad.future.plans
(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

As an incentive, two students who complete the survey by the June 1 deadline will be randomly selected to each receive a \$50 Amazon eGift card.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Asking you to participate in this brief survey and provide the requested information is the best way we have of learning what NC State graduate students are doing after earning their degree. The information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State graduate students, current graduate students who are planning their future paths, employers when making salary offers, and of course with others in our department and college so that they know how our new graduates are doing. *Be assured that your responses are confidential – it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in reports of results.*

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our graduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Institutional Strategy and Analysis at studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
[Assistant Dean Name]
[Assistant Dean Title, College Name]
NC State University

Second Follow-Up Email (May 6, 2022)

To: GFPS non-respondents
From: "Dr. Arnold Bell, Career Development Center" (or corresponding career center director) <studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject: "Please complete the Graduate Future Plans Survey"

Dear [First name],

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation from NC State! According to our records, you have not yet completed the Graduate Future Plans Survey. Whether you have already accepted a job, are searching for employment, pursuing another degree, raising a family, or don't yet know, we would like you to tell us about it in the Graduate Future Plans Survey.

Please take just ten minutes to complete the survey, available online at:
go.ncsu.edu/grad.future.plans
(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

As a show of our appreciation for your time, two students who complete the survey by the June 1 deadline will be randomly selected to each receive a \$50 Amazon eGift card.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Knowing what our students are doing after earning their degree is an essential measure of how well the university is preparing you to meet your goals. In addition, the aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State graduate students, with current graduate students who are planning their future paths, and even with employers. *Be assured that your responses are confidential - it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in reports of results.*

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our graduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Institutional Strategy and Analysis at studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
[Career Rep. Name]
[Career Rep. Title]
[Career Office]
NC State University

Third Follow-Up Email (May 23, 2022)

To: GFPS non-respondents
From: "Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Institutional Strategy and Analysis"
<studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject: "Please take the Graduate Future Plans Survey"

Dear [First name],

Congratulations on recently earning your degree from NC State! On behalf of your department, college, and the University, I, as the Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis at NC State, am emailing you this reminder about the Graduate Future Plans Survey and asking you to take just 10-15 minutes to let us know what you are doing now as a new NC State alumni. The survey closes on Wednesday, June 1 - please don't miss this opportunity to share your experiences with us!

Whether you have accepted a new job or are continuing your career, are seeking a job or pursuing another degree, or have put plans on hold for now, please give us an update in our online survey at:

go.ncsu.edu/grad.future.plans

(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

As an added incentive, two respondents who complete the survey by the June 1 deadline will be randomly selected to each win a \$50 Amazon eGift card.

Your participation is voluntary, but we sincerely hope to hear from you. Systematically collecting this information through this brief survey is the best way we have to learn what our students will be doing after earning their degree. In addition, the aggregate-level information from the survey is helpful to share with prospective NC State graduate students, with current students who are planning their future paths, and even with employers when making salary offers to our graduate students. *Your responses are confidential - it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the information we provide to these groups.*

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our graduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Institutional Strategy and Analysis at studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Nancy Whelchel, Ph.D.

Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis

Institutional Strategy and Analysis

NC State University

Fourth Follow-Up Email (May 26, 2022)

To: GFPS non-respondents
From: "Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Institutional Strategy and Analysis"
<studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject: "Please complete the Graduate Future Plans Survey!"

Dear [First name],

Congratulations on recently earning your degree from NC State! Our records show that as of 9 a.m. this morning, you have not yet completed the Graduate Future Plans Survey. Please take just 10-15 minutes of your time to let us know what you will be doing next. You can access the Graduate Future Plans Survey online at:
go.ncsu.edu/grad.future.plans
(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

The deadline for completing the survey is Wednesday, January 12. Two respondents who complete the survey by 11:59 p.m. on January 12 will be randomly selected to each win a \$50 Amazon eGift card.

Your participation is very important! Leaders across NC State will rely on results from this survey for making decisions about the programs and services offered at NC State. Summarized results will be shared with departments across campus, with NC State graduate students, and with prospective employers.

Please don't miss this opportunity to share your experiences and help NC State, your college, and department not only celebrate the successes of their graduate students but, very importantly, learn where NC State needs to make improvements to better prepare current and future students.

Thank you again for your help with this important effort to learn more about the future plans of our graduate students. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Institutional Strategy and Analysis at studentsurveys@ncsu.edu or call (919) 515-6438.

Sincerely,
Nancy Whelchel, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis
Institutional Strategy and Analysis
NC State University

Fifth Follow-Up Email (June 1, 2022)

To: GFPS non-respondents
From: "Dr. Nancy Whelchel, Institutional Strategy and Analysis"
<studentsurveys@ncsu.edu>
Subject: "Last chance to complete the Graduate Future Plans Survey"

Dear [First name],

Our records indicate that as of about 9 a.m. this morning, you have not yet completed the Graduate Future Plans Survey, an annual survey administered to all students completing a graduate degree at NC State. **This email is a final reminder that the survey closes at 11:59 p.m. tonight!**

Click the link below to begin the brief survey or continue where you left off:
go.ncsu.edu/grad.future.plans
(If the link does not work, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

Remember, by completing the survey today, **you will also be entered into a random drawing for a chance to win one of two \$50 Amazon eGift cards!**

Don't miss this opportunity to share your experiences and help NC State, your college, and department not only celebrate the successes of their graduate students, but also learn where NC State needs to make improvements to better prepare current and future students and its new alumni.

Thank you for your participation in this project. If you have questions about this survey, please contact Institutional Strategy and Analysis at studentsurveys@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Nancy Whelchel, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis
Institutional Strategy and Analysis
NC State University