

## December 2023 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 details of their 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 December GFPS is administered at the end of each fall semester. 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 December 2023 GFPS was in the field from November 27 through January 10, with commencement being held on December 16. On November 27, all doctoral and master's students who as of that day had applied to graduate in December were sent an email from their college dean (or equivalent administrator) 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 administrator) one week later on December 4. On December 12, the second reminder email came from the Executive Director of the Career Development Center for students in a college without its own career services office, and from the director of the student's college career services office (or equivalent career services representative) if their college did have such an office. The final three reminders came from the Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis on December 15, January 4, and January 10. On each of the days that reminders were sent to non-respondents, ISA identified those who had applied to graduate during the intervening period and sent them an invitation as well.

In addition to the invitation and follow-up emails, ISA engaged in other promotional activities to boost response rates. Various administrators, faculty/staff, and career services employees who work with graduate students 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 January 10 were randomly selected to each receive a \$50 Amazon eGift Card.

## Response Rates

The final December 2023 GFPS population consists of the 876 master's and doctoral students who had applied to graduate in fall 2023 and were conferred degrees as of February 28, 2024 (179 doctoral students and 697 master's students).<sup>1</sup> Of these students, 524 participated in the Graduate Future Plans Survey for an overall response rate of 59.8 percent. Participation in the survey was somewhat lower among master's students (58.7%) compared to doctoral students (64.2%).

**Table 1: Response Rate, by Degree Received**

Degree	December 2023 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
Doctoral	179	20.4%	115	21.9%	64.2%
Masters	697	79.6%	409	78.1%	58.7%
Total	876	100.0%	524	100.0%	59.8%

Participation rates for the survey varied by college/school. In looking at master's and doctoral programs combined (Table 2), the College of Design had the highest overall response rate (90.5%). The College of Veterinary Medicine (75.0%), the College of Natural Resources (71.8%), the Poole College of Management (69.0%), the College of Education (67.7%), and Wilson College of Textiles (65.0%) also had high response rates relative to other colleges. The remaining colleges all had response rates between 51 and 57 percent.

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

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<sup>1</sup> The survey population includes doctoral and master's degree recipients only. Students earning a DVM are not included.

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

College/School	December 2023 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	85	9.7%	44	8.4%	51.8%
College of Design	21	2.4%	19	3.6%	90.5%
College of Education	96	11.0%	65	12.4%	67.7%
College of Engineering	367	41.9%	208	39.7%	56.7%
College of Natural Resources	39	4.5%	28	5.3%	71.8%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	41	4.7%	21	4.0%	51.2%
College of Sciences	115	13.1%	62	11.8%	53.9%
Wilson College of Textiles	20	2.3%	13	2.5%	65.0%
College of Veterinary Medicine	8	0.9%	6	1.1%	75.0%
Poole College of Management	84	9.6%	58	11.1%	69.0%
Total	876	100.0%	524	100.0%	59.8%

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

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

College/School	December 2023 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	71	10.2%	40	9.8%	56.3%
College of Design	16	2.3%	15	3.7%	93.8%
College of Education	66	9.5%	42	10.3%	63.6%
College of Engineering	304	43.6%	170	41.6%	55.9%
College of Natural Resources	34	4.9%	24	5.9%	70.6%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	33	4.7%	14	3.4%	42.4%
College of Sciences	77	11.0%	37	9.0%	48.1%
Wilson College of Textiles	12	1.7%	9	2.2%	75.0%
College of Veterinary Medicine	2	0.3%	1	0.2%	50.0%
Poole College of Management	82	11.8%	57	13.9%	69.5%
Total	697	100.0%	409	100.0%	58.7%

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

College/School	December 2023 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	14	7.8%	4	3.5%	28.6%
College of Design	5	2.8%	4	3.5%	80.0%
College of Education	30	16.8%	23	20.0%	76.7%
College of Engineering	63	35.2%	38	33.0%	60.3%
College of Natural Resources	5	2.8%	4	3.5%	80.0%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	8	4.5%	7	6.1%	87.5%
College of Sciences	38	21.2%	25	21.7%	65.8%
Wilson College of Textiles	8	4.5%	4	3.5%	50.0%
College of Veterinary Medicine	6	3.4%	5	4.3%	83.3%
Poole College of Management	2	1.1%	1	0.9%	50.0%
Total	179	100.0%	115	100.0%	64.2%

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