

## May 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 May GFPS is administered at the end of each spring 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 online survey went live about three weeks prior to commencement day, which was earlier than in past administrations. The start of the survey was moved up one week in order to go live while classes were still in session. The May 2023 GFPS was in the field from April 18 through May 11, with commencement being held on May 6.

On April 18, all doctoral and master's students who as of that day had applied to graduate in May 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 April 25. On May 2, 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 two reminders came from the Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Survey Research and Analysis on May 5 and 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 a reminder 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 May 11 were randomly selected to each receive a \$50 Amazon eGift Card.

## Response Rates

The final May 2023 GFPS population consists of the 1,996 master’s and doctoral students who had applied to graduate in spring 2023 and were conferred degrees as of July 5, 2023 (202 doctoral students and 1,794 master’s students).<sup>1</sup> Of these students, 1,095 participated in the Graduate Future Plans Survey for an overall response rate of 54.9 percent. Participation in the survey was slightly lower among master’s students (54.4%) compared to doctoral students (58.9%).

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

Degree	May 2023 Graduating Class	Percent of Population	Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents	Response Rate
Doctoral	202	10.1%	119	10.9%	58.9%
Masters	1,794	89.9%	976	89.1%	54.4%
Total	1,996	100.0%	1,095	100.0%	54.9%

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 2023 (100%). The College of Veterinary Medicine also had a high response rate relative to other colleges, with 80 percent of graduates completing the GFPS (four out of five PhD earners). The remaining colleges all had response rates between 49 and 56 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	May 2023 Graduating Class		May 2023 Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Population	N	% of Survey Respondents	%
Institute for Advanced Analytics	89	4.5%	89	8.1%	100.0%
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	143	7.2%	75	6.8%	52.4%
College of Design	77	3.9%	39	3.6%	50.6%
College of Education	236	11.8%	131	12.0%	55.5%
College of Engineering	781	39.1%	420	38.4%	53.8%
College of Natural Resources	70	3.5%	35	3.2%	50.0%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	253	12.7%	132	12.1%	52.2%
College of Sciences	77	3.9%	38	3.5%	49.4%
Wilson College of Textiles	45	2.3%	23	2.1%	51.1%
College of Veterinary Medicine	5	0.3%	4	0.4%	80.0%
Poole College of Management	220	11.0%	109	10.0%	49.5%
Total	1,996	100.0%	1,095	100.0%	54.9%

\*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	May 2023 Graduating Class		May 2023 Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Population	N	Percent of Survey Respondents	N
Institute for Advanced Analytics	89	5.0%	89	9.1%	100.0%
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	119	6.6%	59	6.0%	49.6%
College of Design	76	4.2%	38	3.9%	50.0%
College of Education	203	11.3%	104	10.7%	51.2%
College of Engineering	716	39.9%	388	39.8%	54.2%
College of Natural Resources	58	3.2%	29	3.0%	50.0%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	237	13.2%	123	12.6%	51.9%
College of Sciences	44	2.5%	22	2.3%	50.0%
Wilson College of Textiles	33	1.8%	16	1.6%	48.5%
College of Veterinary Medicine	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Poole College of Management	218	12.2%	108	11.1%	49.5%
Total	1,794	100.0%	976	100.0%	54.4%

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

College/School	May 2023 Graduating Class		May 2023 Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	N	% of Population	N	% of Survey Respondents	%
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	24	11.9%	16	13.4%	66.7%
College of Design	1	0.5%	1	0.8%	100.0%
College of Education	33	16.3%	27	22.7%	81.8%
College of Engineering	65	32.2%	32	26.9%	49.2%
College of Natural Resources	12	5.9%	6	5.0%	50.0%
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	16	7.9%	9	7.6%	56.3%
College of Sciences	33	16.3%	16	13.4%	48.5%
Wilson College of Textiles	12	5.9%	7	5.9%	58.3%
College of Veterinary Medicine	4	2.0%	4	3.4%	100.0%
Poole College of Management	2	1.0%	1	0.8%	50.0%
Total	202	100.0%	119	100.0%	58.9%

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