

## December 2024 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 2024 GFPS was in the field from November 25 through January 9, with commencement being held on December 14. On November 25, 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 2. On December 10, 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 December 13 and January 7. 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 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 2024 GFPS population consists of 947 master’s and doctoral students who had applied to graduate in fall 2024 and were conferred degrees as of February 24, 2025 (204 doctoral students and 743 master’s students). Of these students, 512 participated in the Graduate Future Plans Survey for an overall response rate of 54.1%. Participation in the survey was somewhat lower among doctoral students (51%) compared to master’s students (54.9%).

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

| Degree   | Dec 2024<br>Graduating<br>Class | Percent of<br>Population | Survey<br>Respondents | Percent of<br>Survey<br>Respondents | Response<br>Rate |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Doctoral | 204                             | 21.5%                    | 104                   | 20.3%                               | 51.0%            |
| Masters  | 743                             | 78.5%                    | 408                   | 79.7%                               | 54.9%            |
| Total    | 947                             | 100.0%                   | 512                   | 100.0%                              | 54.1%            |

Participation rates for the survey varied by college/school. In looking at master’s and doctoral programs combined (Table 2), the College of Veterinary Medicine had the highest overall response rate (83.3%).<sup>1</sup> The Poole College of Management (60.4%) and the College of Engineering (57.3%) also had high response rates relative to other colleges, and as such are slightly overrepresented among respondents. The College of Humanities & Social Sciences (43.2%) and the College of Sciences (42.3%) had the lowest response rates among colleges with more than five graduates.

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

<sup>1</sup> Only those in doctoral and master’s programs in CVM are invited to participate in the survey; the students getting a professional degree, i.e., DVM are not included.

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

| College/School                          | Dec 2024<br>Graduating<br>Class | Percent of<br>Population | Survey<br>Respondents | Percent of<br>Survey<br>Respondents | Response<br>Rate |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| The Graduate School                     | 3                               | 0.3%                     | .                     | .                                   | .                |
| College of Agriculture & Life Sciences  | 96                              | 10.1%                    | 52                    | 10.2%                               | 54.2%            |
| College of Design                       | 21                              | 2.2%                     | 11                    | 2.1%                                | 52.4%            |
| College of Education                    | 88                              | 9.3%                     | 44                    | 8.6%                                | 50.0%            |
| College of Engineering                  | 415                             | 43.8%                    | 238                   | 46.5%                               | 57.3%            |
| College of Natural Resources            | 34                              | 3.6%                     | 19                    | 3.7%                                | 55.9%            |
| College of Humanities & Social Sciences | 37                              | 3.9%                     | 16                    | 3.1%                                | 43.2%            |
| College of Sciences                     | 111                             | 11.7%                    | 47                    | 9.2%                                | 42.3%            |
| Wilson College of Textiles              | 30                              | 3.2%                     | 16                    | 3.1%                                | 53.3%            |
| College of Veterinary Medicine          | 6                               | 0.6%                     | 5                     | 1.0%                                | 83.3%            |
| Poole College of Management             | 106                             | 11.2%                    | 64                    | 12.5%                               | 60.4%            |
| Total                                   | 947                             | 100.0%                   | 512                   | 100.0%                              | 54.1%            |

\*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                          | Dec 2024<br>Graduating<br>Class | Percent of<br>Population | Survey<br>Respondents | Percent of<br>Survey<br>Respondents | Response<br>Rate |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| The Graduate School                     | 3                               | 0.4%                     | .                     | .                                   | .                |
| College of Agriculture & Life Sciences  | 77                              | 10.4%                    | 38                    | 9.3%                                | 49.4%            |
| College of Design                       | 19                              | 2.6%                     | 9                     | 2.2%                                | 47.4%            |
| College of Education                    | 44                              | 5.9%                     | 26                    | 6.4%                                | 59.1%            |
| College of Engineering                  | 339                             | 45.6%                    | 196                   | 48.0%                               | 57.8%            |
| College of Natural Resources            | 26                              | 3.5%                     | 14                    | 3.4%                                | 53.8%            |
| College of Humanities & Social Sciences | 30                              | 4.0%                     | 13                    | 3.2%                                | 43.3%            |
| College of Sciences                     | 84                              | 11.3%                    | 38                    | 9.3%                                | 45.2%            |
| Wilson College of Textiles              | 17                              | 2.3%                     | 11                    | 2.7%                                | 64.7%            |
| Poole College of Management             | 104                             | 14.0%                    | 63                    | 15.4%                               | 60.6%            |
| Total                                   | 743                             | 100.0%                   | 408                   | 100.0%                              | 54.9%            |

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

| College/School                          | Dec 2024<br>Graduating<br>Class | Percent of<br>Population | Survey<br>Respondents | Percent of<br>Survey<br>Respondents | Response<br>Rate |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| College of Agriculture & Life Sciences  | 19                              | 9.3%                     | 14                    | 13.5%                               | 73.7%            |
| College of Design                       | 2                               | 1.0%                     | 2                     | 1.9%                                | 100.0%           |
| College of Education                    | 44                              | 21.6%                    | 18                    | 17.3%                               | 40.9%            |
| College of Engineering                  | 76                              | 37.3%                    | 42                    | 40.4%                               | 55.3%            |
| College of Natural Resources            | 8                               | 3.9%                     | 5                     | 4.8%                                | 62.5%            |
| College of Humanities & Social Sciences | 7                               | 3.4%                     | 3                     | 2.9%                                | 42.9%            |
| College of Sciences                     | 27                              | 13.2%                    | 9                     | 8.7%                                | 33.3%            |
| Wilson College of Textiles              | 13                              | 6.4%                     | 5                     | 4.8%                                | 38.5%            |
| College of Veterinary Medicine          | 6                               | 2.9%                     | 5                     | 4.8%                                | 83.3%            |
| Poole College of Management             | 2                               | 1.0%                     | 1                     | 1.0%                                | 50.0%            |
| Total                                   | 204                             | 100.0%                   | 104                   | 100.0%                              | 51.0%            |

**Prepared by:** J Ehlinger, Survey Research Analyst

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

Institutional Strategy and Analysis

Campus Box 7002

NC State University

Email: [studentsurveys@ncsu.edu](mailto:studentsurveys@ncsu.edu)