

2003 University of Washington Graduates One Year After Graduation: Methodology, Descriptives, and Gender Differences

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INTRODUCTION

This Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) report outlines the methodology for the survey of 2003 University of Washington (UW) graduates nine to twelve months post-graduation. These surveys, which have been conducted annually or biennially since 1978, ask undergraduate and graduate degree recipients about post-graduate activities (especially employment and continuing education activities) and educational outcomes. This document provides links to the survey instruments and to several summary tables.

METHODOLOGY

Population

All 6671 undergraduate and 2787 graduate students who received a degree from the University of Washington during the 2003 calendar year were included in this study.

Instruments

The paper version of the [undergraduate questionnaire](#) was a two-page scannable form. The majority of questions were presented using a closed-ended, forced-choice format. For open-ended items, responses were manually entered into the survey database. The first two pages of the questionnaire were the same as those used in 2001. The first page contained questions concerning educational and occupational status. On the second page, alumni were asked to rate a variety of skills with regard to their own level of ability, the importance of these skills in relation to their current activities, and their satisfaction with the UW's contribution to their development in those areas. Respondents also provided global ratings of their UW education, assessed the usefulness of programs at the Center for Career Services, and provided information about their volunteer and philanthropic activities. Open-ended questions included current job title, name of employer, field of study, and institution of continuing education.

The paper version of the [graduate/professional student questionnaire](#) was a single-page, two-sided, scannable form. Items on the front of the questionnaire were very similar to those on the survey sent to undergraduate degree recipients. The back of the questionnaire contained items that were parallel to, but fewer in number than, those on the undergraduate questionnaire (with some rewording to fit graduate and professional education).

Mailings

Although different instruments were used for undergraduate and graduate/professional degree recipients, the two populations were surveyed simultaneously. Questionnaires were sent to graduates approximately eleven months after they were awarded their degrees, with the intention of providing as much time as possible for alumni to become established in post-graduate activities, while at the same time conducting mailings within the one-year forwarding time-frame allowed by the U.S. Postal Service. Graduates who received their degrees winter quarter 2003 were sent questionnaires beginning in mid-January, 2004, and spring quarter graduates were sent questionnaires in late-April. Summer and autumn quarter graduates were surveyed in early August.

Questionnaires were mailed along with a personalized cover letter, a business reply envelope, and a University of Washington decal (intended to be an incentive to respond to the survey). A second copy of the questionnaire, a personalized letter and a business reply envelope were sent to all alumni who had not returned completed questionnaires within three weeks of the original mailing. The cover letter also informed alumni that they could respond to a Web-based version of the questionnaire if they so desired.

Shown below is the total number of returned questionnaires. Response rates were calculated by reducing the size of the original mailing by the number of questionnaires returned as undeliverable. Surveys were classified as undeliverable when addresses were unavailable or incorrect or the alumnus was deceased. Web-based responses totaled 235 undergraduate degree recipients (12.0% of all undergraduate responses) and 162 graduate/professional degree recipients (13.7%).

Survey Response Rates

	Population N	Undeliverable	Completed Questionnaires	Percentage Returned
Undergraduate --				
Winter	857	16	282	33.5
Spring	3539	185	1074	32.0
Summer	1266	100	301	25.8
Autumn	1009	59	296	31.2
TOTAL	6671	630	1953	32.3
Graduate/Professional --				
Winter	357	10	164	47.3
Spring	1611	103	650	43.1
Summer	424	27	197	49.6
Autumn	395	21	175	46.8
TOTAL	2787	161	1186	45.2

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES

A formal summary of responses to the *Graduate Survey* has traditionally been sent to each academic department for their respective graduates. Equivalent reports are available in PDF format by department or program:

[2003 Graduate Survey Results](#)

A summary of all undergraduate degree recipient responses and significant gender differences can be accessed in PDF format at the following link:

[Response frequency tables](#)
