

BC University Student Outcomes

Highlights

Class of 1998 Five Years after Graduation

How do graduates of BC's universities rate their educational experience?

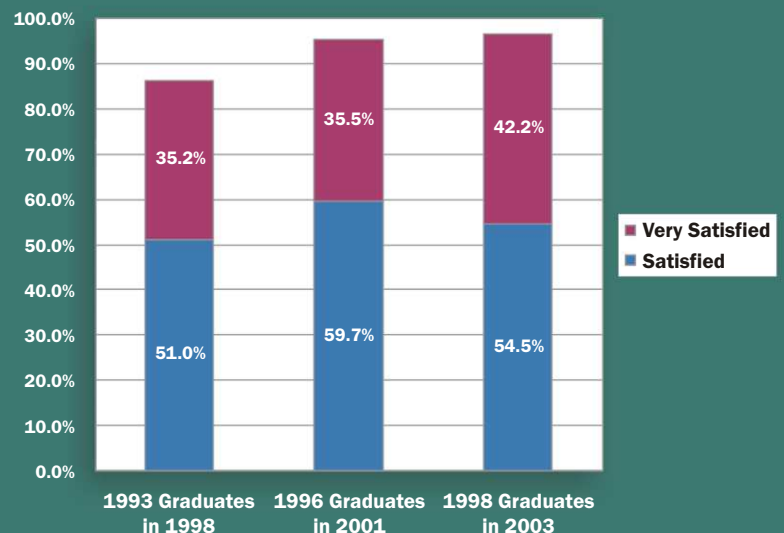
We set out to discover how a university education has influenced the lives of BC university graduates in terms of employment opportunities, income, career path and ongoing learning.

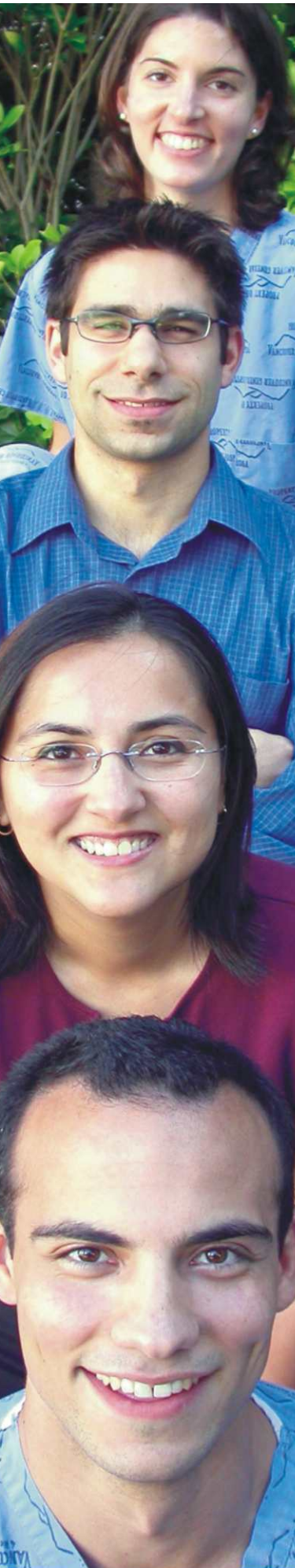
Based on surveys of more than 5,500 individuals completed five years after they graduated in 1998, it is clear that graduates of BC's five universities are very satisfied with their education. They report high satisfaction with their university experience, would take the same program again if they had the choice and enjoy greater levels of employment and higher salaries than those who did not attend university.

Graduates are very satisfied with their education

Year after year, graduates report satisfaction with their educational experience. Almost 97% of surveyed graduates stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the education they received at BC's universities. Interestingly, between 2000 and 2003, the number of surveyed 1998 graduates reporting that they were "very satisfied" with their education increased by four percentage points.

BC graduates report increasing levels of satisfaction with their educational experience





Seventy-five percent would take the same program again

Graduates are generally satisfied with their chosen program of study, with 75.6% of respondents saying they would take the same program again. This number is higher than the number reported in the two previous five-year-out surveys, when 66% of surveyed graduates from 1993 and 70.9% of surveyed graduates from 1996 stated that they would take the same program again.

The number of respondents who would re-enroll in the same educational program varies from program to program, with those enrolled in Computing Science, Law and the Health Professions most positive about their chosen field of study, while those in Life Sciences and Natural Resources were least positive (64.2% and 62.4%, respectively).

Why would some of the surveyed graduates not take the same program again? The most common reasons selected by those who would not do the same program again include a lack of career opportunities or an inability to find a job (35.3%), changed interests (30.2%) or a belief that the courses taken did not apply to the real world (25.7%).

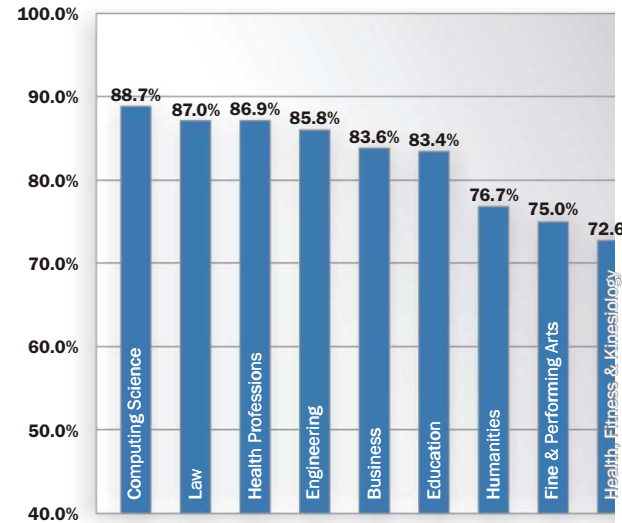
University graduates are highly employable

Without a doubt, a university education improves an individual's ability to find employment, with the survey group experiencing unemployment at less than half the rate of the general population. Only 3.6% of those surveyed in 2003 were unemployed, compared to a provincial unemployment rate of 8.1%.

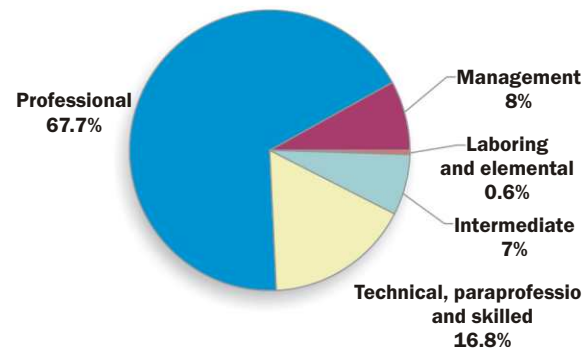
The overwhelming majority of employed graduates (85.7%) hold down a single job, with graduates from Fine and Performing Arts being most likely to hold more than one job (32.7%).

Overall, nearly 75% of those surveyed feel a distinct connection between their program of study and their job. As expected, those in the professional programs of Education and Law report the highest correlation between their university program and their career.

Percentage of respondents who the same program again varies by program



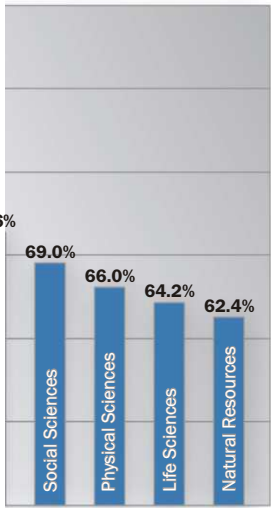
Most graduates work in professional occupations



University graduates earn more

Although early in their working careers, the university graduates surveyed are already earning more, on average, than the general population. Five years after

would select by program



graduation, those surveyed from the 1998 cohort had a mean income of \$53,721 (note that this includes only those working full time and excludes those earning more than \$200,000 per year). Median annual full-time salaries vary by program, with Law graduates earning the most, followed by graduates in Computing Science, Engineering and the Health Professions.

Mean incomes for those from the 1998 cohort who responded to both the 2000 and 2003 surveys increased 27.1% from 2000 to

2003, with salaries rising from \$43,594 to \$55,389 per year.

How do students choose an educational program and career?

Choosing a program of study is a significant decision. Overwhelmingly, personal experience combined with travel and work experience is the major influence on career and program choice. Professors and work experience during studies are also significant factors.

More than half of the survey respondents stated that they had a specific career or employment goal in mind before entering university. Nevertheless, half of those surveyed had explored a variety of potential disciplines before confirming their choice of major. Just over 60% stated that their career or employment expectations had changed either somewhat or significantly over the course of their studies.

Median annual salary varies by program area

	Median
Law	\$80,000
Computing Science	63,000
Engineering	62,000
Health Professions	60,320
Business	55,000
Natural Resources	48,861
Physical Sciences	48,000
Education	47,000
Life Sciences	46,000
Humanities	45,000
Health, Fitness and Kinesiology	45,000
Social Sciences	45,000
Fine and Performing Arts	38,000
Overall	50,000

Employment income for university graduates increased significantly between 2000 and 2003

		1998 in 2000	1998 in 2003	Percentage increase
Overall	Mean	43,594	55,389	27.1%
	Median	40,000	50,000	25.0%

(includes only those respondents who participated in both surveys, are employed full-time and earn \$200,000 or less)

Influences on career or program choices



Graduates are satisfied with their careers

How do you evaluate the success of post-secondary education? Job satisfaction, employment income and career advancement are commonly used indicators. While the results vary from program to program, the greatest percentage of surveyed BC university graduates indicate that they have been somewhat successful or very successful in achieving job satisfaction (82.5%), followed by opportunity to advance their career (76.8%) and employment income (72.5%). And more than 90% of all respondents state they have been somewhat or very successful in achieving other personal goals outside their career.

How did graduates finance their education?

Students finance their university education in many different ways. Employment (31.7%), student loans (26.8%) and family and friends (25.6%) are the main sources of funding. Half of those surveyed graduated with no debt. Of the half that took on debt to obtain their bachelor's degree, 90% relied on government-sponsored student loans. The median amount owing upon graduation was \$16,000.

Five years after graduation, 80% of those surveyed had no remaining government-sponsored student loan debt, and the median amount owing was only \$4,500.

A commitment to lifelong learning

Most university graduates go on to complete further studies including graduate education, courses, workshops, seminars, correspondence and tutorials. Since completing their baccalaureate degrees, 60.7% of those surveyed participated in some form of further education. Of those who were pursuing further education at the time of the study, 54% were studying full time and 29% were completing master's degrees.

About the 2003 Survey Highlights

This document summarizes the key findings from the 2003 University Baccalaureate Graduate Survey. The survey sample consisted of 10,443 individuals who had graduated from BC's five universities in 1998. More than 5,570 responded, representing a valid response rate of 60.5%. Because the 1998 graduate cohort was also surveyed in 2000, we were able to make longitudinal comparisons for those students who responded to both surveys.

The survey was conducted as part of the British Columbia University Student Outcomes Project a long-term research project initiated in 1995 to gather information on student outcomes for BC's universities and the provincial government.

For Summary Reports by Program Classification, detailed Reports by Discipline, and analytical reports, visit the following web site

http://www.tupc.bc.ca/student_outcomes/

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