



One Year Later: The Status of the Class of 2005 Bachelor's Degree Recipients

Fact Sheet
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Study Purpose

One Year Later is an assessment of how graduates of the Class of 2005 from Oregon's seven public universities evaluate their educational experience one year after receiving their bachelor's degrees. The study also provides information on the success of recent graduates—reporting those employed or continuing their education. Graduates were surveyed in 2006, about one year after they had received their degree from one of the following institutions: Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University.

Key Findings

- **Nearly all graduates are engaged productively—either employed or continuing their education:**
 - **93% of graduates are employed and/or continuing their education.** Among employed graduates, 79% are working full time.
 - Nearly **27% are continuing their higher education**, using their bachelor's degree as a stepping-stone to pursue graduate, professional or other studies.
 - **Fewer than 3% of graduates are unemployed** and actively seeking employment, lower than the overall state unemployment rate (5.5% at the time of the survey). This marks a decrease from 6% for the Class of 2003, and 4% from the Class of 2001 one year after they graduated.
 - Almost **70%** of employed graduates report their current **job is very or somewhat closely related to their degree/career goals**. 10% indicated they are still defining their career goals.
- **Recent bachelor's graduates report a high level of satisfaction with their OUS education:**
 - **84% rate the quality of their education as a 5 or 4** on a 5-point scale (in which **5 is "excellent"** and 1 is "poor"), for a mean rating of 4.1. This compares to just under 82% in 2003 and is the **highest level yet attained**.
 - Almost **90%** of graduates are extremely or somewhat satisfied with the university's contribution to their ability to **think critically and analytically**, locate sound and reliable information, and write clearly and effectively.
 - **88% of graduates are pleased with the overall quality of instruction**, and an equal proportion expressed satisfaction with the accessibility of faculty while completing their education. Recent graduates are also pleased with library and computing services. Just over three-quarters were satisfied with the availability of courses.
- **OUS experiences helped graduates contribute to Oregon's economy:**
 - **78% of employed graduates work in Oregon.** Among employed graduates, 45% work in private industry, 14% in education, 10% in healthcare, and 10% in public and government agencies. Significant increases were seen in 2005 graduates entering education and health care fields from the rates seen in 2003.
 - Approximately **72% of graduates employed full-time earn over \$25,000**. Significantly more graduates earn \$50,000 or more (18%) compared to the 2003 study (8%), and significantly fewer 2005 graduates, 29%, earn less than \$25,000 than did the 41% of the Class of 2003 one

year after they graduated. The mean annual salary among 2005 graduates employed full-time is \$34,866.

- **84% of graduates participated in at least one experiential learning program** such as an internship, community service learning project, culminating senior project, or research with a faculty member. Over one-quarter (26%) of participating graduates indicated their experience led *directly* to their current employment.
- Of those employed, **13% use a language other than English** to communicate with customers, clients, students, or employees in Oregon's increasingly diverse work environments. Among those using an additional language, Spanish is used by 79%.

➤ **While in school, many graduates borrowed to help manage college costs:**

- **Two-thirds of graduates took on debt** to finance their degree. Among those borrowing money, 96% report taking on student loans.
- Over half (56%) of graduates took on student loan debt of \$20,000 or less.
- Among graduates making student loan payments, 70% pay less than \$200 monthly, with approximately one-quarter paying under \$100 per month.
- On average, Class of 2005 respondents who were employed full-time were paying 6% of their monthly income toward their student loan debt.
- Among respondents taking on debt to finance their degree, 31% report accumulating debt on personal credit cards.

➤ **Graduates choose different pathways to a bachelor's degree:**

- **44% entered OUS as transfer students** – the majority from Oregon community colleges. Over three-quarters (76%) of transfer students are extremely or somewhat satisfied with the transfer process. 42% of graduates entered as freshmen right out of high school.
- 86% of recent graduates were living in Oregon at the time they applied for college.
- Approximately **35% are the first in their immediate families to earn a bachelor's degree**, an increase from 31% for the Class of 2003. These *first generation college students* are more likely than other students to enter OUS as transfer or returning students, participate in an internship experience, be employed full-time while in college, accumulate student loan debt, and receive a Pell grant to finance their education.
- **88% of graduates were employed while completing their undergraduate education**, including 14% who worked full-time.

Study Methodology

In the spring of 2006, the research firm ORC Macro conducted telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,762 bachelor's degree recipients from the class of 2004-05. A supplemental study to assess the earnings of respondents employed full-time was completed by the Portland State Survey Research Laboratory in December 2006.

Citation and Contact Information

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