

QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey

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May/June 2024



Social
Research
Centre



QILT
Quality Indicators for
Learning and Teaching

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri People who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our company is located, and the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia, where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. The Social Research Centre is committed to honouring First Nations peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

The Social Research Centre would especially like to thank higher education institutions and students that contributed to the QILT surveys. Without the enthusiastic and committed assistance of these institutions, the QILT surveys would not be such a success. .

Project sponsor:

The project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education

Contact:

For more information on the conduct and results of the QILT program, the team can be contacted:

The Social Research Centre
Level 5, 350 Queen Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
Telephone: (613) 9236 8500
qilt@srcentre.com.au
qilt.edu.au



Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT): Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS)

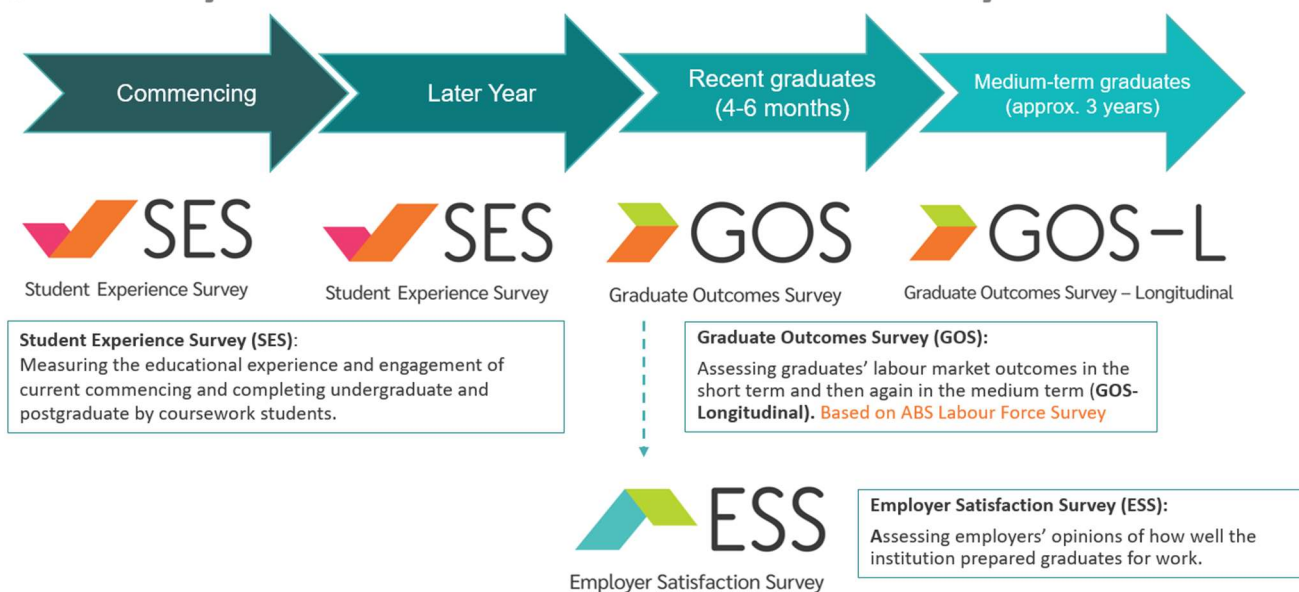
Introduction

The Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) are a suite of government endorsed surveys for higher education, across the student life cycle from commencement to employment. QILT makes available robust, nationally consistent performance data for Australian higher education, helping drive quality improvement.

QILT surveys are a methodologically sound foundation for:

- Informing student choice (ComparED website)
- Measuring Performance (Performance based funding and TEQSA Risk assessment)
- Supporting continuous improvement to “improve the quality of (higher) education in Australia” (HESA), institutional performance indicators and evaluation.

QILT surveys in the context of the Student Life Cycle



The QILT suite consists of four surveys:

- The Student Experience Survey (SES) is a survey of current on-shore undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students looking at students' overall educational experience and sense of belonging with five focus areas including Teaching Quality and Engagement, Peer Engagement, Skills Development, Student Support and Services and Learning Resources as well as negative effects on study, freedom of expression, whether students have considered leaving and a dedicated international student module.
 - Sample is sourced from TCSI enrolment data and additional contact data sourced from institutions.
 - 141 institutions, 247,961 completed course surveys, 37.0 per cent response rate (2022)
 - National Report includes all responses, International Student Report is a subset of survey responses to further examine international student findings.

- The Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) is a survey of recent undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research graduates (4-6 months after course completion) which is undertaken over three collection periods in November, February and May. This survey is originally based on ABS Labour Force Survey and examines short-term (i.e., four to six months after course completion) labour market outcomes (rates of full-time employment, overall employment, labour force participation and median full-time salaries), further study outcomes, skills utilisation across graduate occupations, reasons for skills-based or time-based underemployment, how well qualifications prepared graduates for their current jobs and graduate satisfaction with their completed course.
 - Sample is sourced from TCSI completions data and additional contact and contextual data sourced from institutions.
 - All: 126 institutions, 116,250 completed surveys, 38.7 per cent response rate (2023)
 - International: 104 institutions, 28,081 completed surveys, 31.5 per cent response rate (2023)
 - The National Report includes only domestic graduate responses. An International Graduate Outcomes Report reports on responses from International graduates only.
- The GOS-Longitudinal (GOS-L) is a survey of “medium term” graduates which collects updated data from graduates who completed the GOS three years prior (for example 2020 GOS and 2023 GOS-L).
 - Sample is sourced from graduates who have completed the GOS.
 - 116 institutions, 40,177 completed surveys, 45.0 per cent response rate (2023)
- The Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS) links the experience of recent graduates from the GOS to the views of their direct supervisors with a strong focus on graduate skills and preparedness for their current job.
 - Sample is sourced from graduates who have completed the GOS and have supplied contact details for their direct supervisor (approx. 7 per cent of employed graduates).
 - 2,992 completed surveys, supervisor response rate 45.0 per cent

For each survey institutions receive the following data products:

- Unit record files (csv, spss – SAS on request) including 5-year time series all demographic and institution supplied data
- An institutional data visualisation report (Tableau) (time series)
- Verbatim files (csv, spss) single year
- An open-ended item coding tool (Excel)
- Data maps & a data dictionary.

Universities Australia (UA) and the Independent Higher Education Association (IHEA) have negotiated data sharing agreements for their members to share unit record data files and Tableau workbooks which allow for detailed benchmarking.

National Reports and supporting tables are published on the [QILT Website](#) and comparison data is made available through the [ComparED](#) website which allows for direct comparison of up to 6 institutions and study areas. Operational information files and webinars are available through a Provider Portal on QILT site.

Graduate Skills

The skills items in the three surveys related to graduates, the ESS, GOS and GOS-L, were originally designed based on a report Employer Satisfaction Survey: report for the Department of Education, June 2014 which outlined the survey methodology and five graduate attributes scales including:

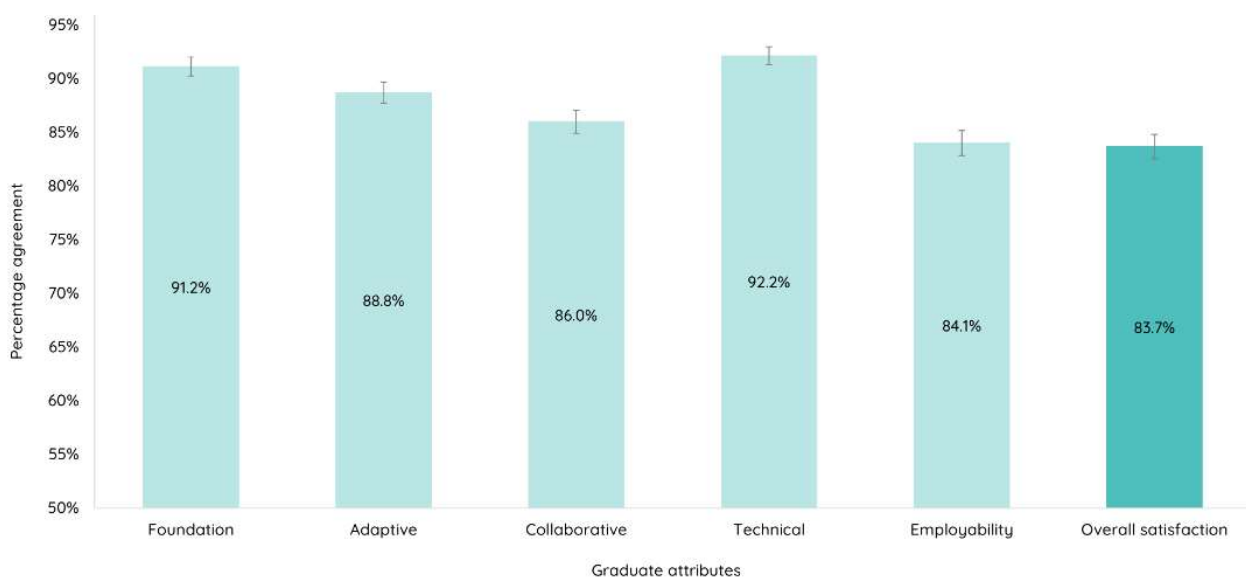
For each skill or attribute, to what extent do you agree or disagree that <E403>'s <E308> from <E306C> prepared them for their job? If the skill is not required by <E403> in their role, you can answer 'Not applicable'.

- Foundation Skills
 - 1. Oral communication skills
 - 2. Written communication skills
 - 3. Numeracy skills
 - 4. Ability to develop relevant knowledge
 - 5. Ability to develop relevant skills
 - 6. Ability to solve problems
 - 7. Ability to integrate knowledge
 - 8. Ability to think independently about problems
- Adaptive Skills
 - 9. Broad background/general knowledge
 - 10. Ability to develop innovative ideas
 - 11. Ability to identify new opportunities
 - 12. Ability to adapt knowledge to different contexts
 - 13. Ability to apply skills in different contexts
 - 14. Capacity to work independently
- Collaborative Skills
 - 15. Working well in a team
 - 16. Getting on well with others in the workplace
 - 17. Working collaboratively with colleagues to complete tasks
 - 18. Understanding different points of view
 - 19. Ability to interact with co-workers from different or multi-cultural backgrounds
- Technical Skills
 - 20. Applying professional knowledge to job tasks
 - 21. Using technology effectively
 - 22. Applying technical skills in the workplace
 - 23. Maintaining professional standards
 - 24. Observing ethical standards
 - 25. Using research skills to gather evidence
- Employability Skills

- 26. Ability to work under pressure
- 27. Capacity to be flexible in the workplace
- 28. Ability to meet deadlines
- 29. Understanding the nature of your business or organisation
- 30. Demonstrating leadership skills
- 31. Demonstrating management skills
- 32. Taking responsibility for personal professional development
- 33. Demonstrating initiative in the workplace

These five scales plus an “Overall Satisfaction” item were included in the ESS beginning in 2016. 2023 results are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Employer satisfaction with graduate attributes and overall satisfaction, 2023 (% with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



NB The “Overall satisfaction” item is based on the item, “*Based on your experience with this graduate, how likely are you to consider hiring another graduate from the same course and institution, if you had a relevant vacancy?*” with a positive response ‘*Very likely to consider*’ or ‘*Likely to consider*’

Three of these scales developed for the ESS were also incorporated into the initial design of the GOS (which replaced the Australian Graduate Survey) and GOS-L (which replaced the Beyond Graduation Survey) where they were asked of all employed graduates, in order to compare directly with employer ratings as above:

“For each of the following skills or attributes, to what extent do you agree or disagree that your <QUALNAME> from <E306CTXT> prepared you for your current job? If the skill is not required in your role, you can answer ‘Not applicable’.”

- Foundation Skills
- Adaptive Skills
- Collaborative Skills

The GOS from 2016-2020 also included the Generic Skills items from the previous Australian Graduate Survey and asked of all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework respondents regardless of whether they were employed (*5 point agreement scale from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree*).

- The <course> improved my skills in written communication
- I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations
- I consider what I learned valuable for my future
- As a result of my <course>, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems
- My course helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work
- My university experience encouraged me to value perspectives other than my own

NB: The SES has a set of skills items in the Skills Development focus area. However, these are not directly aligned with the QILT graduate and employer surveys. The SES Skills Development focus area uses a five point response frame (*Not at all/Very Little/Some/Quite a bit/Very Much*):

To what extent has your <course> developed your:

- critical thinking skills?
- ability to solve complex problems?
- ability to work with others?
- confidence to learn independently?
- written communication skills?
- spoken communication skills?
- knowledge of the field(s) you are studying?
- development of work-related knowledge and skills?

In 2020, the skills scales were removed from the GOS (due to survey length). However, the Graduate Attributes Scales have been retained in the standard GOS-L and ESS pending review. In 2023, 44 institutions (23 universities and 21 NUHEIs) have retained the three scale items on a fee for service basis which speaks to the interest in data on graduate skills ratings by the sector.

As of 2020 there are no skills items in the GOS. The closest proxy is the Preparedness item and two free text fields which are presented to all employed graduates and repeated across all three instruments:

- *“Overall, how well did your <course> prepare you for your job” (Not at all to Well and Very Well)*
- *“What are the main ways that <course name> prepared you for employment in your organisation?”*
- *“What are the main ways <course name> could have better prepared you for work in your organisation?”*

Study Area and BFOE (ASCED):

All three graduate surveys include the course discipline code (ASCED), graduates' occupations at the 6 digit ANZSCO level as well as ANZSIC Industry coding. ASCED codes are aggregated to create 21, 45 and 73 study area categories which do not directly align with the broad fields of education (BFOE) categories. However, the ESS is reported using BFOE categories to maximise reportability. While institutions are sampled and reported against E308 Course Code, some institutions are still surveyed and reported against Majors which are supplied by institutions directly, and are often not available through TCSI.

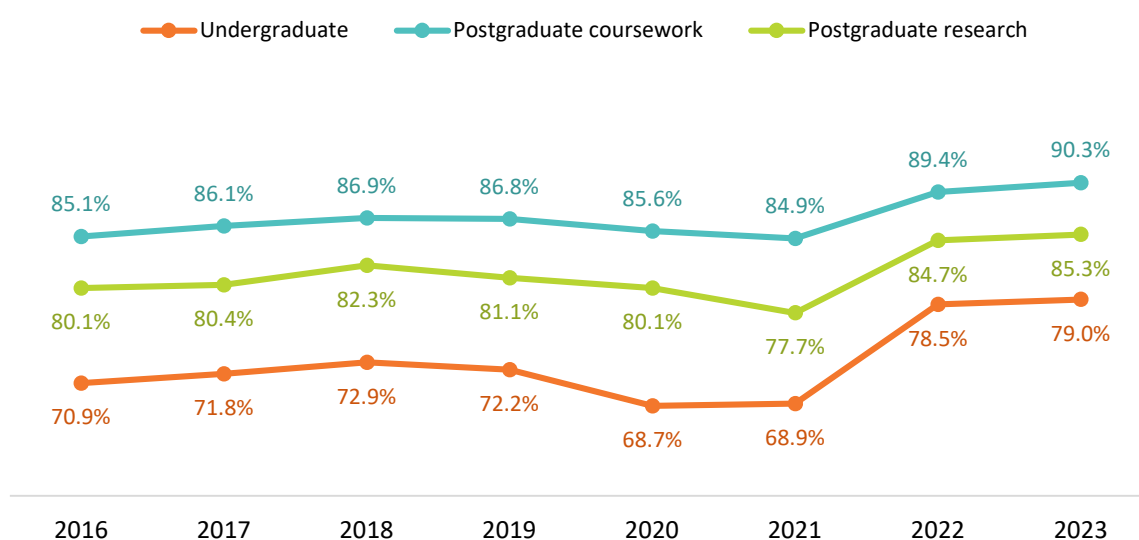
GOS 2023 Domestic labour market outcomes

Full-time employment (as a proportion of those available for full-time work)

In 2023, graduate full-time employment rates¹ achieved their highest levels since the GOS commenced in 2016 at all study levels. However, most of this increase occurred between 2021 and 2022, with a more modest increase in 2023. The same trend was seen at the postgraduate coursework and postgraduate research levels as seen in Figure 2.

There is a notable gap in full-time employment rates between study levels. In part, this difference between undergraduate and postgraduate coursework full-time employment rates may reflect the fact that postgraduate coursework graduates are more likely to be established in the labour market before completing their studies.

Figure 2 GOS Domestic graduate full-time employment rate (%) by study level, 2016-2023



Median annual full-time salary

Reporting of graduate salaries in the 2023 GOS includes graduates who were employed full-time in Australia and asks graduates to report what they “actually” or “usually” earn in all their jobs combined². Self-reported salary data should be interpreted with some caution and other explanatory factors, such as time in employment and previous employment experience, are likely to vary between study levels.

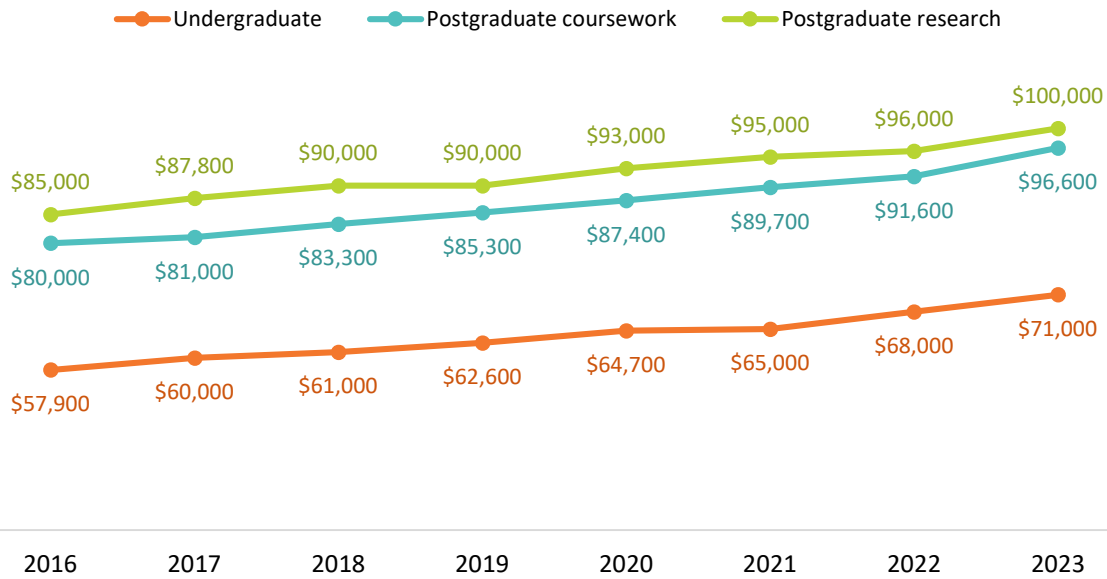
Higher level qualifications generally lead to higher salary outcomes as well as improved employment outcomes as shown in **Figure 3**. For undergraduate salaries from 2021-2022 the increase was in the order of around 5 per cent compared to an increase for postgraduate coursework graduates of around 2 per cent and around 1 per cent for those who had completed postgraduate research qualifications. Between 2022-2023 the increase for undergraduates was around 4.4 per cent with postgraduate coursework around 5.5 per cent and postgraduate research around 4.2 per cent.

NB: [GOS salaries data](#) reported on the ComparED website was replaced in 2021 to data sourced from the ATO.

¹ The full-time employment rate is defined as graduates who were usually or actually in paid employment for at least 35 hours per week, in the week before the survey as a proportion of those available for full-time work. Graduates are considered available for full-time work if they were employed full-time or looking for full-time employment in the week prior to the survey.

² This paper presents salaries in nominal terms. This means the salary amounts reflect the actual values as they existed in the respective year (that is, the values are not adjusted for inflation).

Figure 3 GOS Domestic graduate full-time median annual salary (\$) by study level, 2016-2023



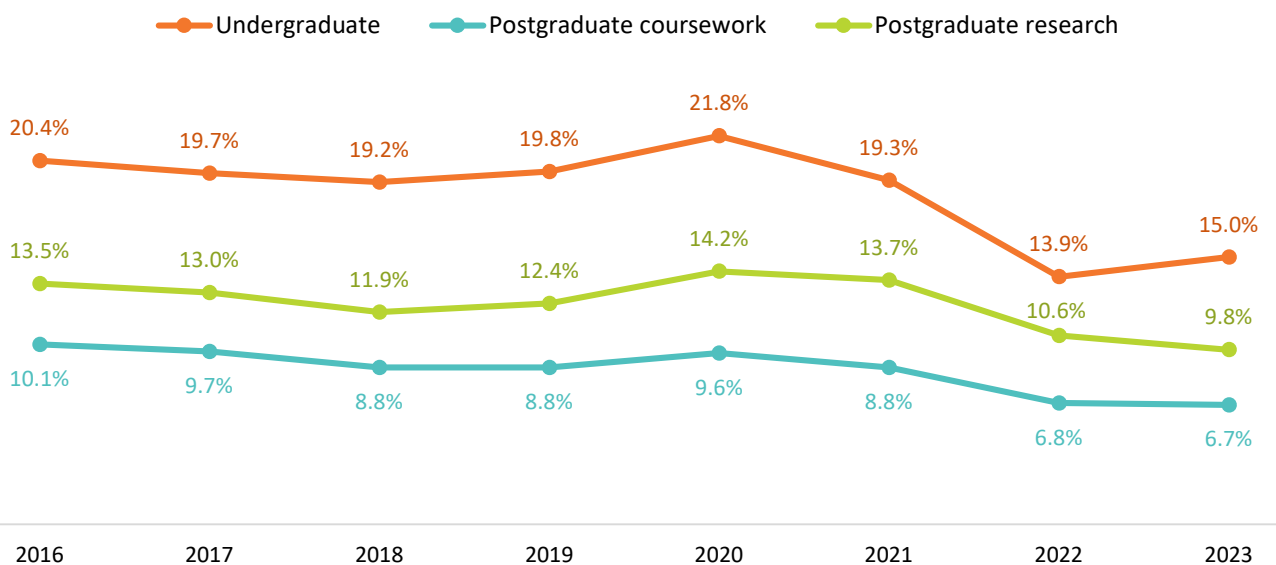
There remains a gender pay gap in 2023, with no study areas showing female median full-time salaries higher than males, and only three study areas, where salaries were equivalent four to six months after course completions. This gap exists in all study levels. However, it is much more pronounced for postgraduate coursework graduates, where graduates are older and have been attached to the labour market for longer.

Underemployment

‘Underemployment’ is defined as the proportion of graduates employed part-time (i.e., less than 35 hours per week) who would prefer to work more hours (i.e. ‘seeking more hours’). NB this is different to the current ABS definition which includes those working over 35 hours per week).

In 2023, the proportion of underemployed undergraduates was 15.0 per cent which was an uptick from the low of 13.9 per cent in 2022. However, this still represents a decrease compared with 19.3 per cent in 2021 and the high of 21.8 per cent in 2020 and corresponds with the higher rates of full-time employment in this period.

Figure 4 GOS Proportion of domestic graduates employed part-time seeking more hours, 2016-2022 (% of those employed)



Typically, female graduates are more likely to report that they are underemployed than males. Undergraduate females seeking more hours are more likely to cite personal factors as the main reason than male undergraduates. For example, 5.4 per cent of females reported 'Caring responsibilities' as a reason, in comparison to only 1.5 per cent of males. However, 'No more hours available in current position' was the number one reason for both female and male undergraduates seeking more hours.

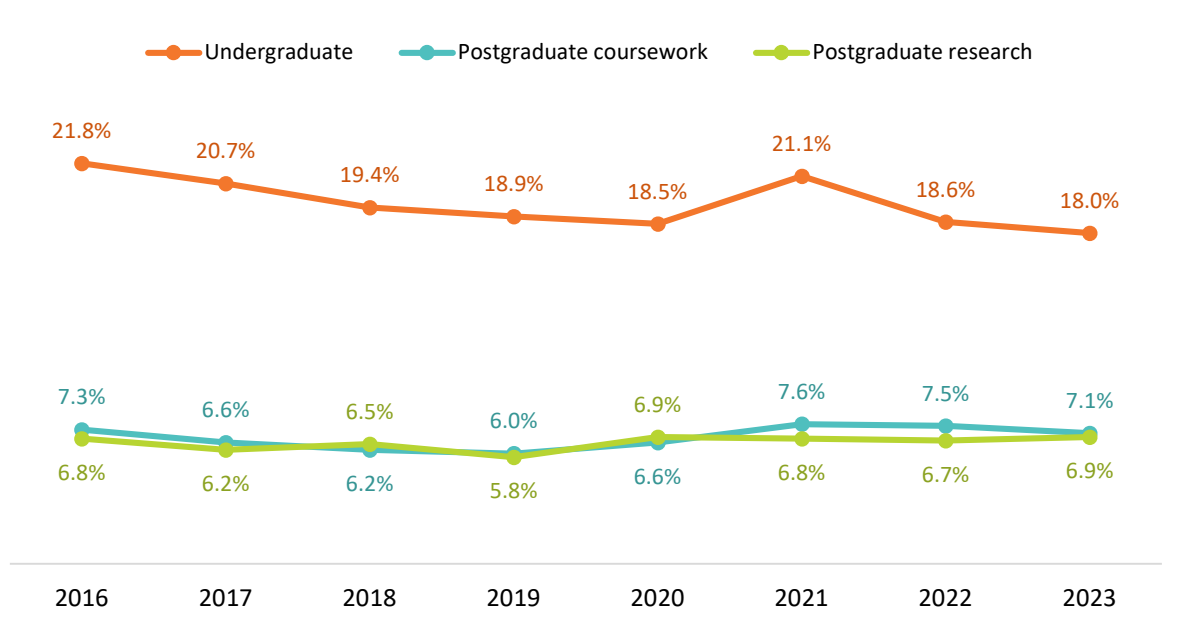
Female undergraduates employed part-time were also more likely than males to report they were working part-time but not seeking more hours, 18.2 and 10.7 per cent, respectively with 12.7 per cent of females reporting that this was due to caring responsibilities compared to only 2.2 per cent of males.

Domestic graduates in further full-time study

In 2023, 18.0 per cent of undergraduates were engaged in further full-time study four to six months after course completion, which was a slight decrease from 2022. This result was expected as fewer students typically proceed to further study and more enter employment when the labour market improves.

The proportions of postgraduate coursework and postgraduate research graduates in further full-time study in 2023 was comparatively lower at 7.1 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively. These proportions are within the same ranges as previous years.

Figure 5 GOS Proportion of domestic graduates in further full-time study, 2016-2023



Study areas with the highest proportion of undergraduates proceeding to full-time study in 2023 included Science and mathematics, Psychology and Humanities, culture and social sciences. Undergraduates who completed degrees in study areas more targeted to specific occupations tended to be less likely to proceed to further full-time study. These included Rehabilitation, Nursing and Teacher education.

Graduates were also asked to indicate the level and broad field of education (rather than study area) of their further study. In 2023, Society and culture was the most common field of education destination chosen by undergraduates undertaking further full-time study, Health, Natural and physical sciences and Education.

Undergraduates from Science and mathematics courses main areas of further full-time study were in the Natural and physical sciences and Health. Those with qualifications in Psychology moved mainly into courses in Society and culture and graduates who had completed courses in Humanities, culture and social science who proceeded to further full-time study were also mainly studying in Society and culture courses.

Domestic graduate skills utilisation

The GOS includes a rich array of information about the nature of graduate employment such as the proportion of graduates employed in managerial and professional occupations, the proportion of graduates stating they believed their current job does not fully utilise their skills or education and how well their qualification has prepared them for their current job.

Occupation type

The proportion of undergraduates working in managerial and professional occupations is one measure of skills utilisation. The classification of occupations³ used by the ABS suggests that most managerial and professional occupations have a skill level that is commensurate with qualifications at the bachelor level or higher.

In 2023 69.2 per cent of undergraduates employed full-time were working in managerial or professional occupations, compared to 85.5 per cent of postgraduate coursework graduates. This difference may be related to postgraduate coursework graduates being more likely to be attached to the labour market prior to undertaking their studies, compared to undergraduates. This is evidenced by postgraduate coursework graduates being, on average, older and more likely to be studying externally. Postgraduate research graduates had the highest rate of graduates employed full-time in managerial and professional occupations, with 90.6 per cent.

Table 1 Domestic graduates employed in managerial and professional occupations by employment type and study level, 2021-2022 (% of those employed)

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate coursework		Postgraduate research	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Full-time employed	67.8	69.4	84.3	86.0	91.8	92.9
Overall employed	55.1	58.8	81.8	82.7	90.5	91.3

Figure 6: GOS Domestic Undergraduate Occupations (ANZSCO 2) in FT Employment, 2023 (N=1-4694)



³ The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). The ANZSCO was jointly developed by the ABS, Stats NZ and the then Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Graduate preparedness

Another measure of skills utilisation is how well the qualification prepared graduates for their current job. In 2023, 74.6 per cent of undergraduates in full-time employment reported that their course had prepared them well or very well for their current job, which was similar to postgraduate coursework graduates, at 76.1 per cent. Postgraduate research graduates reported the highest levels of preparedness at 82.5 per cent (see **Table 2**). These results were consistent with 2022.

It should be noted that this item is only presented to graduates who are currently employed. Several factors are likely to influence ratings of preparedness, including the “quality” of the job (such as occupational level or perceived overqualification), or the stage of the graduate’s educational journey (such as those who are enrolled in further full-time study).

Table 2 Qualification prepared graduate well or very well for current job, by employment type and study level, all occupations, 2023 (% of those employed)

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate coursework	Postgraduate research
Full-time employed	74.6	76.1	82.5
Overall employed	67.2	74.9	80.4

Preparedness for current job by study area

While the “quality” of the graduate’s employment may have an influence on graduate perceptions of how well their completed course has prepared them for their current role, a marked variation exists in the levels of graduate preparedness by study area. This may be related to some study areas being more targeted to specific occupations. For example, ratings of levels of preparedness for undergraduates employed full-time ranged from over 90 per cent for those who have completed Pharmacy or Rehabilitation qualifications, to 61.2 per cent for those with Creative arts qualifications.

Preparedness for graduates working in managerial or professional occupations by study area

In general, the skills or education obtained by graduates may better align with employment in professional or managerial occupations, as these occupations are more likely to require a skill level that is commensurate with qualifications at the bachelor level or higher. Assessing graduate preparedness from this perspective may provide a better basis for evaluating how well the graduates were prepared for work. Overall, graduates employed full-time in managerial or professional occupations are more likely to positively report on their preparedness for their current occupation compared to ratings associated with graduates employed across all occupations, particularly in areas such as Creative arts, Dentistry, Science and mathematics and Communications which may support the contention that graduates ratings of preparedness are at least partly dependent on the occupational level of the work they are undertaking.

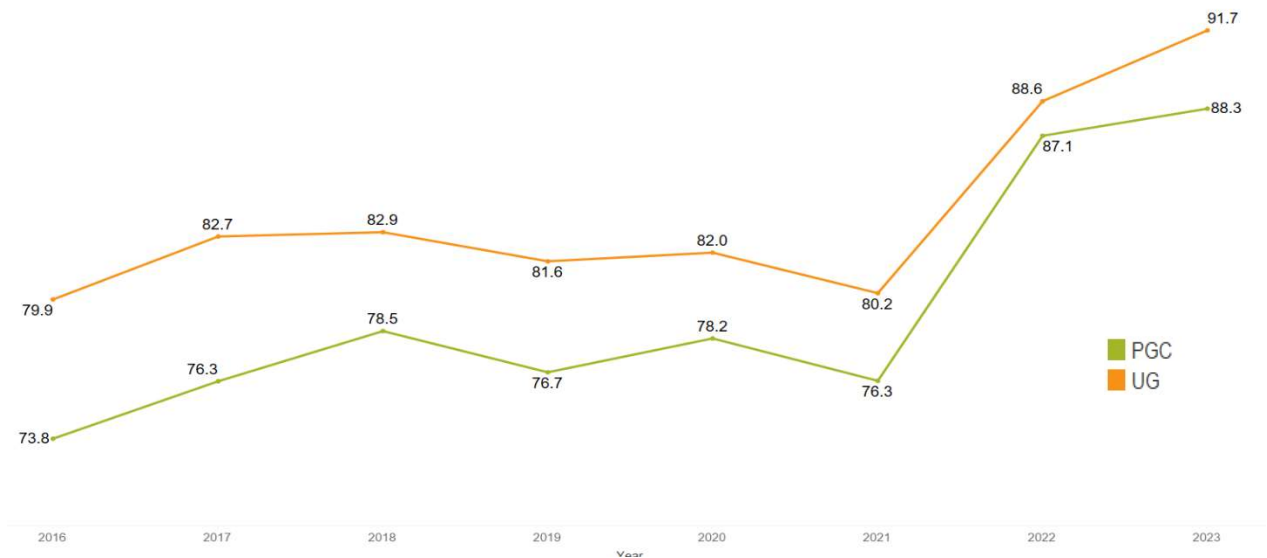
A short case study – Initial Teacher Training courses

If we look at Initial Teacher Training Qualifications (TCSI E312 = 21) we see that there are programs at both the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels such as a Bachelor of Education (often undertaken as a dual qualification with other studies such as Arts or Mathematics) at the undergraduate level and Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas or Master of Teaching at the Postgraduate Coursework level.

In general, responses from domestic graduates from initial teacher training courses in 2023 comprises around 78 per cent female graduates and about 68 per cent aged 30 or over. Around 8 per cent of graduates had a stated disability and 2 per cent identified as first nations. In terms of study mode (internal/mixed and external/online) roughly 64 per cent of respondents were enrolled as internal/mixed mode. In 2021 the relative socio-economic status proportions were around 18 per cent low SES, 56 per cent middle SES and around 26 per cent high SES. The state in which the student was located at the time of the

survey (collected in-survey) shows that Victoria had the largest cohort with around 27 per cent of responses, with NSW around 25 per cent, Queensland around 20 per cent and Western Australian around 9 per cent. In 2023 we see that 91.7 per cent of those who completed undergraduate initial teaching qualifications and 88.3 per cent and postgraduate coursework level qualifications were in full-time employment (of those available). This is a marked improvement on full-time employment rates from 2016-2021 and a slight improvement on 2022.

Figure 7: GOS Initial Teacher Education Full-Time Employment rate by Study Level



Around 91.9 per cent of Initial teacher education graduates those employed full-time (at all study levels) are employed as Education Professionals (ANZSCO 2) in 2022. If we break this down further to ANZSCO 3 we see that 89.1 per cent are employed as “School Teachers” and at the ANZCO 4 level, we see that most are employed as Secondary School Teachers (40.0 per cent) and Primary School Teachers (35.6 per cent).

Figure 8: GOS Domestic All levels, Initial Teacher Education (E312) Occupations (ANZSCO 4) in FT Employment, 2023 (N=1-1,574)

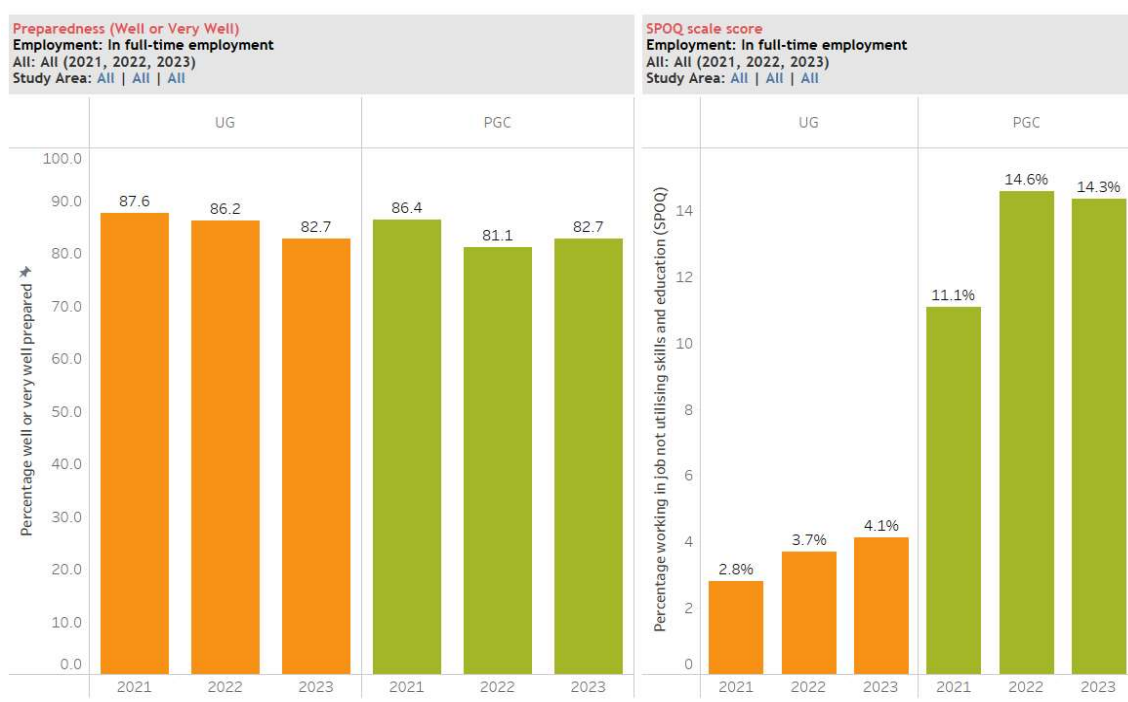


While full-time employment rates and salaries are similar for both course level graduates, there are some marked differences in the Scale of Perceived Overqualification and ratings of graduate preparedness between these groups. In 2023, 7.7 per cent of those who had completed undergraduate initial teacher education courses reported that they were “overqualified” for their current job compared to 18.1 per cent of

those who had completed a postgraduate coursework level initial teacher education qualification. We see also that in 2023, 81.6 per cent of undergraduates reported that their course had prepared them “Well” or “Very well” for their current job compared to postgraduate coursework graduates which is similar to postgraduate coursework graduates at 80.0 per cent.

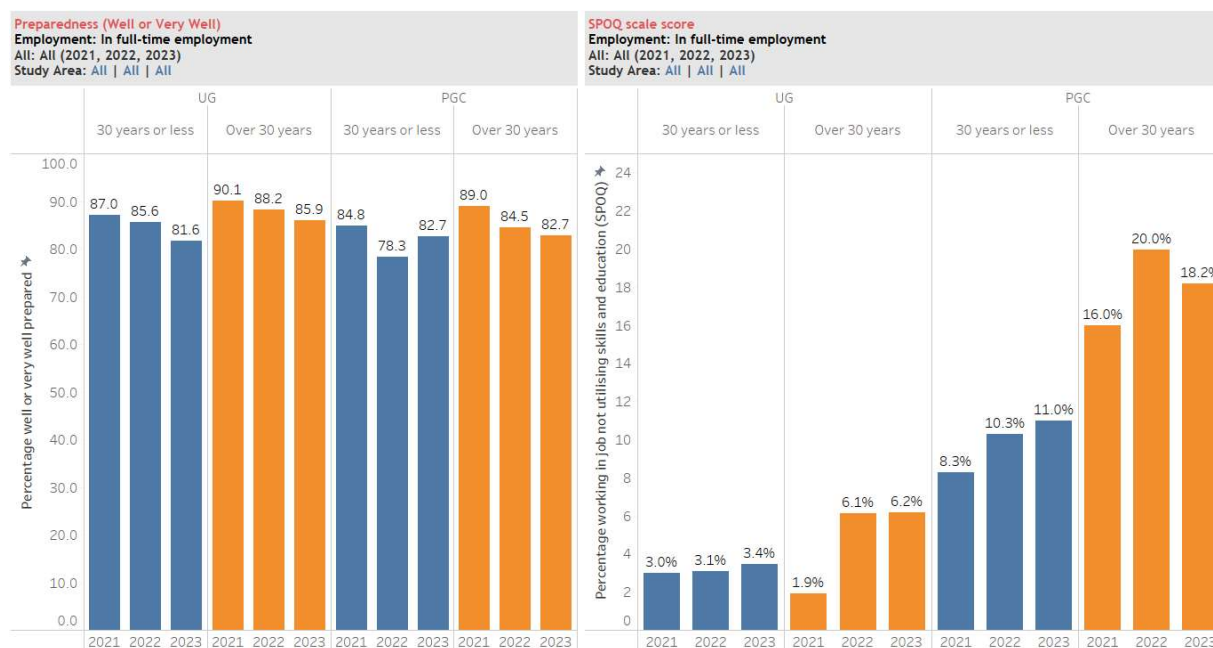
If we only look at graduates who are employed as “Education Professionals” at ANZSCO level 2, we see that these differences persist with those working as Education Professionals who have recently completed an initial teacher education undergraduate course rating much less likely to report being overqualified (4.1 per cent) compared with those who had completed a postgraduate coursework qualification at 14.3 per cent. However, in 2023 both undergraduates and postgraduate coursework graduates rated their preparedness the same at 82.7 per cent.

Figure 9: GOS Domestic Initial Teacher Training graduates working full-time as Education Professionals Preparedness and SPOQ by Study Level 2021-2023



If we look at the two study level groups, we can see that there are differences in their demographic make-up where those doing undergraduate initial training qualifications are more likely to be under 30 years of age (with almost 71 per cent in 2023), compared to postgraduate by coursework graduates (with around 52 per cent). As seen in Figure 10 If we compare the reported preparedness and perceived overqualification broken down by age, we see that older graduates were more likely to report that they were “overqualified”, particularly amongst those who had completed an initial teacher training qualification at the postgraduate coursework level.

Figure 10: GOS Domestic Initial Teacher Training working as Educational Professionals, Preparedness and SPOQ by Study level and Age 2021-2023



In 2023, as part of a separate study for the Department of Education a content analysis was undertaken of the two verbatim fields in the GOS and GOS-Longitudinal related to the preparedness item with graduates working as teachers (ANZSCO 241 School Teachers) regardless of their most recent course. This study included around 10,000 comments from graduates.

- *“What are the main ways that <course name> prepared you for employment in your organisation?”*
- *“What are the main ways <course name> could have better prepared you for work in your organisation?”*

From this study, graduates employed as teachers identified a number of areas where their institution could have better prepared them for their employment:

- 32% of responses were related to institutional and course attributes including course content and career preparation and guidance.
- 31% of responses were related to work experience and practical skills including work/industry experience or placements, practical and hands-on experience and less theory/more practical teacher knowledge and strategies.
- 25% of responses were related to teaching skills and knowledge including behaviour management and teacher administration, assessment and reporting methods

Note, responses may relate to more than one theme and therefore the frequencies will not sum to 100%.

As this example shows, the QILT GOS and GOS-Longitudinal dataset has detailed information which can assist institutions to respond to the real world employment context(s) of their graduates and use this to improve the delivery and content of their courses to best prepare their graduates for the world of work.

Level 5, 350 Queen Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Locked Bag 13800
Law Courts Vic. 8010

Phone (61 3) 9236 8500
Fax (61 3) 9605 5422

info@srcentre.com.au
srcentre.com.au



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