



OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION OF
GRADUATES FROM THE UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I
ACADEMIC YEARS 1998, 1999 & 2000
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Employment Observatory
International and Educational Cooperation Office
Vice-Rectorate for International Cooperation and Solidarity
Universitat Jaume I

Objectives

To study how students who graduated from the Universitat Jaume I in the academic years 1998, 1999 and 2000 have integrated themselves into employment, depending on the degree courses they studied.

Specific objectives

- To collect information from Universitat Jaume I graduates about a number of aspects concerning their integration into the labour market.
- To analyse the relationship between the requirements of the job market and the training they received.
- To provide potential employers with information that can be of use to them.
- To provide the university institutions with relevant information about the employability of graduates and the training needs of both students and graduates.

Technical characteristics of the study

SCOPE: the Universitat Jaume I of Castelló de la Plana, Spain.

UNIVERSE: graduates who have completed their studies at the UJI and obtained their degree in the academic years 1998, 1999 and 2000 (20 degrees with the new programmes of study have been included). Population: 3365.

SAMPLE COLLECTION: stratified random sampling. Answers collected: 779.

STRATIFICATION: in accordance with the following variables:

- Year of graduation (1998, 1999 and 2000).
- Gender.
- Branches of education,¹ according to the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport.

METHOD USED FOR DATA COLLECTION: survey sent out by post and later reinforced by telephone in order to maximise the number of written responses; respondents could also choose to answer a shortened version over the phone.

SAMPLING ERROR: for a confidence level of 95.5% and $p = q = 0.5$, the real error is ± 3.08 for the sample as a whole and assuming simple random sampling was performed.

DATE CONDUCTED: July, August and September 2003.

Sociodemographic profile

Females constitute 64.6% of the sample, with a mean age of 25.

Over 50% of the graduates live with their parents, while a higher degree of emancipation is observed in the older degrees. As far as their place of origin is concerned, 86% of the graduates come from the province of Castelló.

Academic and complementary training during their studies

With regard to their choice of career, 83% were able to study the degree at the top of the list they had chosen before starting at university. This is a very positive point and fosters students' integration, motivation and involvement in their studies.

¹ Branches of education:

Humanities

Long-cycle/short-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees

Long-cycle/short-cycle Social Science and Law

As regards the length of their studies, the students from the courses that were analysed needed 25.65% more time to finish their studies than they were initially expected to take. This indicator is lower in all the areas of study except in Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees, where students take an average of 63.37% longer to finish their studies.

As far as the number of hours devoted to academic activities is concerned, graduates spent an average of 27 hours a week attending classes, and even more in the case of technical degrees. The average amount of time spent by students on attending tutorials was one hour per week, but this figure increased in the case of Humanities and short-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees. Furthermore, they spent another 12 hours a week studying. Females performed the three activities more frequently than males. Turning to consider non-academic activities carried out while they were studying, roughly a third of graduates were involved in some kind of employment while at university, although this percentage was lower among those studying technical and experimental degrees. In summer, 34% of the graduates had a job of some sort. Finally, almost 40% helped with housework at home.

As regards their view of the style of instruction, graduates considered that teaching focused on theory and concepts was given prominence (an average of 3.24 out of 4), followed by the lecturer or professor as the main source of information (2.5) and regular class attendance. The least significant element was writing a dissertation.

Students' level of language proficiency on graduating from university was another factor that was analysed. With respect to their knowledge of Catalan, 98% of all graduates had some knowledge of the language, and their levels of proficiency (on a scale from 0 to 4) were as follows: 3.64 in reading comprehension, 3.28 in verbal skills and 2.97 in writing. Furthermore, as regards European community languages, 98% of the graduates had some knowledge of English, 31% in the case of French and 15% knew some German. Knowledge of foreign languages is more frequent in Humanities degrees and, to a lesser extent, in long-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees.

Activities providing pre-professional experience

With regard to the activities performed to acquire practical experience during their studies, over 94.41% of students did compulsory Practicum/work placements while they were at university, although this percentage has become even higher in more recent academic years. This indicator reflects the UJI's commitment to achieve maximum employability of its graduates. Additionally, 12% of graduates also did practical training on a voluntary basis outside the academic curriculum while they were studying at university, especially in the case of those from long-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science and long-cycle Social Science and Law degrees. Another crucial complementary element of the official studies is taking part in exchange programmes for undergraduates. In the three years under examination in the study, 11.93% of students took part in such schemes, although this figure increased to 15.87% in 2000. Participation in exchange programmes for graduates, however, is much lower but nonetheless significant (around 2.5% of graduates took part in them).

Evaluation of the official studies and commitment to studies

Motivation for studying a university degree is very high – over 92% of graduates would study at university again if given the opportunity, and the percentage has become even higher in more recent years. Should they have the opportunity to do so, 58.2% of the sample would study the same degree course (this indicator ranges from 63.44 in long-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees to 47.06 in short-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees). One measure of students' satisfaction is shown by their answers when asked whether they would come back to the Universitat Jaume I to study: 95.4% of graduates stated that they would, with a slightly higher value in all areas of study (for example, short-cycle Social Science and Law degrees, 97.87%) except for Humanities (86.67%). This indicator reflects the strong link that is formed between graduates and their university.

Complementary training after graduation

Once they had finished their university studies, over three quarters of the total number of graduates carried out some kind of complementary training, above all continuing training for workers and to a lesser extent professional vocational training. Moreover, in over 37% of cases graduates chose the Universitat Jaume I to complement their official education. The main reasons for beginning these studies are, first, the desire to *give their career a boost* and, second, the need to *be up to date* in their respective fields of interest. Students from short-cycle Social Science and Law degrees are the ones who appear to have the most training needs.

Another type of stay abroad is that carried out for professional or instructional purposes. Almost 15% of UJI graduates have taken part in one of these stays, the majority from Humanities degrees (42%). This type of stay is on the increase, as can be seen by the fact that in the academic year 2000 the figure had risen to almost 20%.

Graduates' work status

The employment rate among graduates is high, 88.18%, and a lot higher still among those who graduated in 1998 (92.68%). The figure is slightly higher for male graduates. Unemployed people mainly spend their time on complementing their training and, secondly, on fulfilling their family duties.

Furthermore, 93 out of every 100 graduates were working when the survey was carried out. This rate is higher in long-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Sciences (96.2%) or short-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Sciences (95.74%), and in the academic years 1998 and 1999.

On finishing their studies, 35% of the total number of graduates were already working, although there are some differences from one degree to another. Thus, whereas both long and short-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees displayed higher percentages (38% and 39% for the long and the short cycles, respectively), the lowest values were offered by Humanities degrees (28%). As regards gender, the percentage of females who were working on completing their studies was 9 points higher than that of males.

The most common situation among university graduates who are already in the job market is that they have already worked in two or three different jobs.

One of the most useful ways of getting a job is work placements; indeed, one out of every four graduates was employed by the company where they did their work placement. This indicator is much higher in the case of technical and experimental degrees, and reflects how valuable work placements are for graduates' integration into the job market.

Job hunting

According to the survey, 76% of graduates looked for a job after graduating. An important indicator is the length of time spent on finding their first job: 53% of UJI graduates find employment within the first three months after finishing their studies. At 6 months the figure rises to 67% and at one year increases to 84%. The greatest percentage of graduates who find employment within the first 3 months is found among those from Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees, with 81% and 78%, respectively.

Once they have finished their studies graduates use a wide range of job-hunting strategies, the most frequent being the formal techniques (answering to job ads, used by 50% of graduates, and utilising a public employment agency, which was chosen by 48%). Nevertheless, informal techniques, such as using personal contacts, were also very common (42%). Females and graduates from the humanistic and social-legal areas make more intensive use of job hunting strategies than the others.

As far as the effectiveness of the techniques used to obtain their first job are concerned, the graduates stated that the most effective means of finding employment is to have *personal contacts* (25%), followed by *contacting employers on their own account* (13%). Both are basic active techniques. The third most popular is a passive technique – *answering job ads* (13%).

The most successful techniques for getting their current job vary slightly. Thus, there is a tendency to use more formal techniques, as 23% found their present job through *personal contacts*, 19% through *preparing for public exams*, 13% *by answering job ads*, 9.5% by getting directly in touch with employers on their own behalf, and 6.8% through an employment bureau.

Characteristics of their current employment

Over 30% of graduates continue to work in the first job they found after graduating.

Their employment is related to what they studied in 83% of cases, and the figure rises to over 90% in technical degrees. Both in their first and the present job, the percentages are higher among males than females.

According to the results of the survey, 86% of graduates work full-time, 10% part-time and 2% work shifts.

With regard to their place of work, 78.6% of graduates currently work in the province of Castelló, 10% in València, 2.3% in Alacant, and 8.21% elsewhere in Spain, whereas less than 1.1% work in other European countries. This represents a difference of 8 points with respect to the number of graduates who had their family residence in Castelló while they were studying (86%). There are notable differences from one area of study to another.

Of the graduates who are presently working, 63% have a work contract for an indefinite period of time. But there are differences from one degree to another. Thus, long-cycle Technical Engineering and Experimental Science graduates are those with the highest percentage of indefinite work contracts (68%). The results of the survey showed that 9.9% have fixed-term contracts, and another 17% have seasonal contracts. Of the total number of graduates, 5.9% are self-employed. In relation to their first job, a significant increase was observed in the number of indefinite contracts while the number of temporary ones dropped.

As regards the professional categories they are working in, 10% are in management, 22% are senior technicians, and 27% intermediate technicians. The number of males is higher in the first two categories, while in the case of intermediate technicians the distribution is spread equally over both genders.

More than 34% of the graduates are employed by enterprises with 10 or less workers, followed by 28% who work in institutions with 11 to 50 employees, 17% in companies with 51 to 199, 9.68% work in enterprises with between 200 and 499 workers, and finally 11% are in companies with more than 500 employees. This distribution largely reflects the structure of the business fabric in the Valencian Community, which is chiefly made up of small and medium-sized enterprises.

If we turn our attention to the distribution according to the functional areas of the company, graduates are most commonly situated within the category *others*, since they are skilled workers with a university education who carry out a number of different duties in *SMEs*. In terms of percentages, these are followed by graduates working in *administration and financial* departments (17%), *customer service* (13.68%), *general services* (9.42%), *teaching* (8.74%), *production* (8.52%) and a significant 2.4% of graduates who work in departments devoted to *R&D*.

In their present job, 34% of graduates earn between 12 000–18 000 euros per year, 27% have a salary between 6000–12 000 euros, 20% are paid between 18 000–24 000 and 9% earn between 24 000–30 000 euros. Graduates from Technical Engineering and Experimental Science degrees (both long and short cycles) are the best paid. There is a difference between genders, which disfavours women, since the percentage of females is higher in the lowest wage bracket.

Of the graduates, 66.6% work in the private sector, while 32% are employed in the public sector. In the analysis by economic sectors, the public sector employs the highest number of graduates (32%), the ceramic industry and business services provide employment for 14% and 12% of graduates, respectively. Other sectors worth mentioning are finance (7%), computer services (4%) and construction (3%).

Characteristics of the first job

All the objective and subjective indicators improve when comparing graduates' present employment and their first job.

This job is related to their studies in 69% of cases.

According to the results of the survey, 68% worked full-time while over 20% had a part-time job.

The match between training received and degree of satisfaction with present job

In this regard, 68% of UJI graduates consider that the work they carry out matches their level of studies, while 3.6% thought that their job required a higher level and 28% said that it required a lower level.

Other indicators of job quality are the chances of promotion and responsibility. Thus, 85% consider that they perform tasks involving responsibility in their job, while 65% believe they have the possibility of being promoted in the same place. In this latter indicator, there are gender differences in favour of males.

As far as indicators of job satisfaction are concerned, the aspects that most satisfy graduates in their workplace are their colleagues and the work content (76% are very or quite satisfied with these issues). This is followed by 61% who are very or quite satisfied with their organisation and, finally, 50% feel quite or very satisfied with the salary they are paid.

Lastly, the graduates consider themselves to be quite self-efficient when it comes to doing their work, since they gave professional self-efficacy an average score of 3.13 on a scale from 0 to 4.