

MEDIA RELEASE

4 April 2012

Initial results of world-first graduate survey released

The baseline report of the Graduate Longitudinal Study New Zealand (GLSNZ) has been released this week. The GLSNZ, a large-scale survey of New Zealand university graduates aiming to determine the ongoing impact of a university education on graduates' lives, is a world-first in its scope.

A total of 8,719 final-year students (undergraduate and postgraduate) across all eight universities – representative of the approximately 40,000 students who completed their studies at New Zealand universities during 2011 – completed a comprehensive on-line questionnaire between July and December 2011. The same individuals will be approached for follow-up surveys in two, five, and 10 years' time.

The baseline survey has captured a broad range of information including: demographics; university expectations, experience and satisfaction; employment plans and career aspirations; fit with qualification/training; academic beliefs/attitudes, current financial circumstances; physical health, disability and functional impairment; health risk behaviours; emotional wellbeing; personality type; social support/social integration and community involvement.

Initial findings indicate that the majority of graduates viewed their study programme and experience at university positively; more than three quarters of the 2011 graduates reported that they thought their study programme had been worth the investment in terms of effort, time and money. Among those who had taken out student loans (19% didn't take out a loan), the average size of the loan was NZ\$15,001 to NZ\$20,000.

In terms of plans for the near future, three quarters of the graduates expected to pursue a longer term career, with a number of this group also working in jobs to ensure immediate income. Almost half anticipated undertaking further study during this period. The majority of graduates planned to work in New Zealand, with a significant proportion also planning to work overseas, and a percentage intending to do both. Half of all international PhD graduates and almost two thirds of other international students indicated that they planned to work in New Zealand over the next two years. The most common fields in which graduates planned to seek employment were: Education and Training, Health Care and Medical, and Science and Technology.

"While a large amount of data has been collected during this baseline survey, the follow-up surveys in two, five, and 10 years' time will result in a breadth and depth of data that will provide an unparalleled opportunity to study, in detail, graduates' lifecourse pathways after graduation," says Professor Richie Poulton, GLSNZ Director.

"The first decade after leaving university is a particularly salient and important career establishment period."

The GLSNZ was commissioned by Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara with main funding support from the Tertiary Education Commission. The GLSNZ survey was carried out by the internationally-respected National Centre for Lifecourse Research (NCLR) – a multi-university group headquartered at the University of Otago and led by Centre Co-Director Professor Richie Poulton.

The Extended Baseline Report can be found on the GLSNZ website at www.glsnz.org.nz.

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