

# Master's Exit Survey

## 4 Years of Highlighted Findings

### 2016/17 – 2019/2020

#### Summary and Top Findings

The voluntary Master's Student Exit Survey is completed by graduating Graduate Center Master's students. This survey was implemented in 2016 and has been ongoing since then.

The aim of the survey is to better understand the future employment, career, and education plans of graduates and the impact of their master's degree. These results help inform The Graduate Center's planning and decision-making as it relates to master's programs.

The overall response rate to the survey is 26%; however, this rate has been close to 20% for the past three years. There are three time periods each year for graduation – September/October, February and May/June. In most years, responses are higher for May/June graduation.

For questions about the findings, or further aggregated analyses of the data, please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at [institutionalresearch@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:institutionalresearch@gc.cuny.edu).

The top findings of the survey include the following takeaways:

- 98% of MA graduates agree that completing their master's degree was worth it.
- For those employed at the time of graduation, 72% report that their employment utilizes their master's education.
- Almost a third of master's graduates plan to pursue additional studies
- 90% of graduates report a positive experience at the GC:

#### Top positive feedback

- outstanding faculty and students
- diversity, location, library
- wide range of available courses and programming

#### Top improvements desired

- more financial support
- more physical spaces to interact with other students

- 71% of master's graduates report a positive experience in their *program*:

#### Top positive feedback

- outstanding program faculty
- wide range of available courses
- challenging material

#### Top improvements desired

- more advising needed
- lack of community

## Who Responded to the Survey

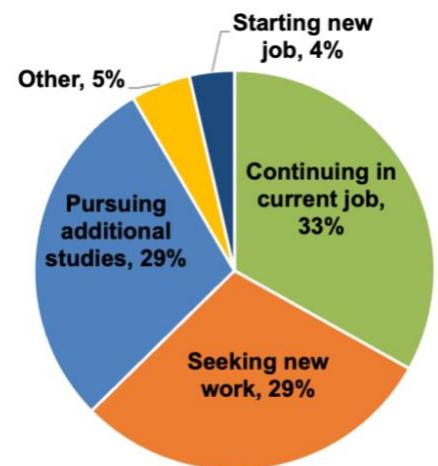
There are currently 16 master's programs at The Graduate Center. Responses to the Exit Survey during this four year period come primarily from Liberal Studies (75%), as well as from Political Science (8%), Linguistics (6%), and Middle Eastern Studies (4%). All other programs have only one or no graduates responding to the survey. From the Liberal Studies program, the concentrations with 10 or more responses include Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, American Studies, International Studies, Individualized Studies, and Migration and Global Studies.

## Future Work and Study Plans

- 72% of master's graduates are employed at the time of their graduation (41% FT; 31% PT).

Looking to their time *post*-graduation:

- 29% of master's graduates are seeking *new* work at the time of graduation.
- 29% of master's graduates plan to pursue additional studies.
- 33% plan to continue in their current job or career, among which 72% report that their employment utilizes their master's education.



Career/schooling plans

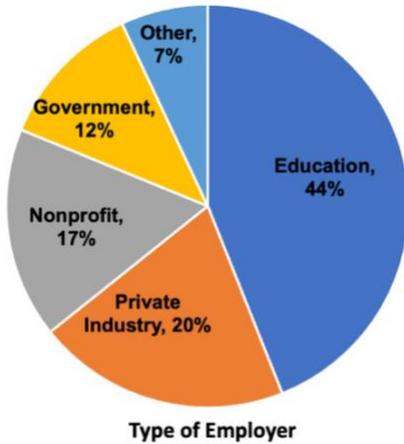
## Education Plans

At the time of graduation,

- 29% of master's graduates plan to pursue additional studies.

- Among them: 67% plan to apply and 33% have already been admitted to a program
  - The top schools are: The Graduate Center (6), other CUNY colleges (3), Columbia University (2), and SUNY (2).
- 79% are pursuing doctoral studies; 10% are pursuing a professional degree (JD, MD); 10% are pursuing further master's degrees
- 42% report that a master's degree is required or encouraged for admission; 40% state it is not required

## Type of Employer and Job Sectors



- The top **types of employers** for graduates are:
  - Education (44%), Private Industry (20%), Nonprofit (17%), and Government (12%).
- When asked about what **job sector** they will be working in, 39% are/will be working in education/training. Other job sectors reported include IT/software development, editorial/writing, administrative/clerical, and project/program management.

## Impact of Master's Degree

- 98% of master's graduates agree that completing their master's degree was worth it.
- For those who are seeking new work, 69% indicate that their master's degree has made a difference in their job search.
- 81% have made lasting friendships while at The Graduate Center.

## Graduate Center Feedback

When asked to share feedback regarding experiences at the Graduate Center as a whole, the comments were overwhelmingly positive and glowing.

- 90% of master's graduates report a positive experience at the GC.
- Most frequent positive comments included the outstanding faculty and students, diversity, location, library, the range of available courses, and programming.
- The few negative comments included issues with a lack of financial support for master's students, more social opportunities and physical spaces needed to interact with other students, and the need for more diversity in faculty.

## Master's Program Feedback

When asked to share feedback regarding experiences in their MA program, the comments were somewhat more mixed.

- 71% of master's graduates report a positive experience in their program, with many mentions of wonderful faculty, a wide range of courses to choose from, and challenging material.
- Another 27% of the program feedback was either mixed or negative.
  - About 10% of responses indicated a need for more advising and support within the master's programs.
  - Additionally, some graduates reported a lack of a cohort or sense of community, and a lack of integration into the larger GC community.
  - Finally, some graduates indicated that there was a lack of the needed courses available.