

2024-2025 GRADUATE FIRST DESTINATION SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OIRA, Spring 2026

Introduction

The Graduate First Destination Survey investigates the employment and enrollment in graduate/professional school activities of recent graduate degree recipients with the goal of estimating post-graduation outcomes rates. The target populations are certificate, master's, and doctoral degree recipients who graduated between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

Initial data were gathered just before graduation via an online instrument. For those who did not respond to the initial survey, or indicated they were still seeking employment, a follow-up online survey invitation was sent to the via email. A third follow-up to non-responders and those still seeking employment involved obtaining information from the graduate via social media. National Student Clearinghouse and Marquette University enrollment data were also utilized to place non-responders into the outcome category related to enrollment in additional graduate/professional school. Data collection ended on December 31, 2025; thus, outcomes reflect the first destination of the graduates up to that date.

Results

Knowledge Rate¹

The overall knowledge rate for those who graduated in the 2024-2025 academic year, including all follow-up contact, was 75%, which is a slight decrease from last year and an increase compared to two years ago (78% for the 2023-2024 cohort and 68% for the 2022-2023 cohort). The tables below show the knowledge rate by college/school and degree level. The "Other" category includes the School of Dentistry (graduate programs only) and Graduate School.

Table 1. First Destination Survey Knowledge Rate by College and Degree Type.

College/School	Number of Graduates	Number of Respondents	Knowledge Rate	Degree Level	Number of Graduates	Number of Respondents	Knowledge Rate
Arts and Sciences	158	138	87%	Master's	819	600	73%
Business Administration	167	141	84%	Ph.D.	192	165	86%
Communication	13	13	100%	Certificate	45	29	64%
Education	157	127	81%	Overall	1,056	794	75%
Engineering	55	44	80%				
Health Sciences	224	197	88%				
Nursing	271	129	48%				
Other	14	5	36%				
Overall	1,056	794	75%				

¹ Knowledge Rate is defined by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) (NACE) as the percentage of the graduating class for whom an outcomes destination is known. It includes the sum of all the employment categories, plus service and military, plus continuing education, plus the number of students still seeking an outcome or not seeking an outcome. It excludes those students for whom no information is available. Mathematically, the knowledge rate can be expressed as: (# employed + # service + # military + # continuing education + # still seeking employment + # still seeking continuing education + # not seeking) / total graduates

First Destination Post-Graduation Outcomes

Graduates were grouped into one of several post-graduation outcomes based on their survey response. The categories are mutually exclusive. “Other Not Seeking” represents those engaged in post-graduation service, in the military full or part time, those planning to continue education, or students who indicated they were not engaged in an activity and were not actively seeking employment or enrollment in a graduate/professional program. “Seeking Employment” indicates those who were not engaged in any activity above and were still seeking employment as of December following graduation. In 2024-2025, the percentage of graduates that are full-time employed (81%) is about equal to the last cohort (82%) and slightly lower compared to 83% in 2022-2023.

Table 2. First Destination Outcomes by Graduating Cohort

	2020-2021 (n=632)	2021 - 2022 (n=719)	2022 - 2023 (n=692)	2023 - 2024 (n=780)	2024 - 2025 (n=794)
Employed, full-time	81%	86%	83%	82%	81%
Employed, part-time	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	7%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	6%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Other Not Seeking	1%	0%	0%	2%	2%
Seeking Employment	4%	4%	5%	6%	6%

The table below shows the career outcomes rate ² by college and degree level. The career outcomes rate for the 2024-2025 cohort was 93%.

Table 3. First Destination Career Outcomes Rate by Graduating Cohort, College, and Degree Level

College	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Arts and Sciences	96%	92%	87%	83%	84%
Business Administration	96%	97%	99%	98%	99%
Communication	100%	93%	100%	85%	92%
Education	94%	95%	87%	93%	88%
Engineering	100%	91%	95%	98%	95%
Health Sciences	99%	95%	99%	94%	98%
Nursing	93%	98%	94%	92%	93%
Overall	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%
Degree Level	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Doctoral	99%	98%	97%	94%	96%
Master's	95%	95%	94%	92%	92%
Certificate	94%	95%	95%	98%	100%
Overall	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%

² Career Outcomes Rate is a national benchmark from the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#). It is the number of graduates who have landed in any of the employment categories, plus service, military, and continuing education, divided by the number of students for whom an outcome is known. It excludes graduates identified as not seeking an outcome. Expressed mathematically the career outcomes rate is: (# employed + # service + # military + # continuing education) / (# employed + # service + # military + # continuing education + # still seeking employment + # still seeking continuing education)

First Destination Post-Graduation Outcomes by College

The information below shows the post-graduation outcome rates for seven colleges at Marquette. The Graduate School and School of Dentistry are omitted due to a low number of respondents.

Table 4. First Destination Outcomes by College

	2020-2021 (n=111)	2021 - 2022 (n=117)	2022 - 2023 (n=127)	2023 - 2024 (n=119)	2024 - 2025 (n=138)
College of Arts and Sciences					
Employed, full-time	73%	74%	65%	66%	62%
Employed, part-time	2%	3%	2%	6%	7%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	17%	12%	16%	12%	13%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Other not seeking	4%	4%	5%	3%	2%
Seeking	3%	5%	11%	13%	14%
College of Business Administration	(n=161)	(n=140)	(n=149)	(n=174)	(n=141)
Employed, full-time	91%	91%	97%	89%	94%
Employed, part-time	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	3%	5%	1%	5%	2%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other not seeking	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%
Seeking	4%	3%	1%	2%	1%
College of Communication	(n=18)	(n=14)	(n=15)	(n=20)	(n=13)
Employed, full-time	83%	71%	80%	80%	46%
Employed, part-time	6%	7%	7%	5%	15%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	11%	14%	13%	0%	31%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other not seeking	0%	0%	0%	5%	8%
Seeking	0%	7%	0%	10%	0%
College of Education	(n=48)	(n=73)	(n=93)	(n=105)	(n=127)
Employed, full-time	77%	85%	84%	84%	76%
Employed, part-time	1%	1%	1%	5%	6%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	10%	4%	2%	2%	5%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	4%	3%	1%	0%	1%
Other not seeking	2%	3%	0%	3%	4%
Seeking	4%	4%	12%	7%	9%
College of Engineering	(n=31)	(n=32)	(n=44)	(n=53)	(n=44)
Employed, full-time	68%	72%	82%	77%	80%
Employed, part-time	3%	0%	0%	4%	2%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	26%	16%	11%	15%	14%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%
Other not seeking	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Seeking	0%	6%	5%	2%	0%

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	2020-2021 (n=87)	2021-2022 (n=152)	2022-2023 (n=157)	2023-2024 (n=141)	2024-2025 (n=197)
College of Health Sciences					
Employed, full-time	98%	94%	96%	90%	94%
Employed, part-time	0%	1%	3%	3%	3%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Other not seeking	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Seeking	1%	5%	1%	6%	2%
College of Nursing	(n=170)	(n=180)	(n=100)	(n=159)	(n=129)
Employed, full-time	73%	88%	63%	81%	81%
Employed, part-time	1%	4%	8%	3%	4%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	16%	2%	20%	6%	2%
Other not seeking	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Seeking	6%	2%	5%	8%	6%

Table 5. First Destination Outcomes by Degree Type

	2020-2021 (n=87)	2021-2022 (n=117)	2022-2023 (n=108)	2023-2024 (n=162)	2024-2025 (n=162)
Doctoral					
Employed, full-time	95%	95%	95%	90%	92%
Employed, part-time	1%	3%	1%	4%	4%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Other not seeking	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Seeking	1%	2%	3%	6%	4%
Master's	(n=527)	(n=580)	(n=565)	(n=577)	(n=600)
Employed, full-time	79%	85%	81%	81%	79%
Employed, part-time	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	8%	6%	6%	5%	7%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	6%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Other not seeking	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Seeking	4%	4%	5%	7%	7%
Certificate	(n=18)	(n=22)	(n=19)	(n=41)	(n=29)
Employed, full-time	83%	77%	74%	76%	83%
Employed, part-time	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%
Graduate/professional school, full-time	11%	5%	5%	12%	0%
Graduate/professional school, part-time	0%	9%	5%	7%	17%
Other not seeking	0%	5%	0%	2%	0%
Seeking	6%	5%	5%	2%	0%

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Starting Region

Graduates indicated their current location. In 2024-2025, 76% of respondents are in Wisconsin or Illinois post-graduation, remaining relatively consistent with 2023-2024 and 2022-2023.

Table 6. Starting Region by Graduating Cohort

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Wisconsin	65%	62%	63%	63%	63%
Illinois	11%	14%	13%	14%	13%
Other Midwest	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%
South	8%	7%	7%	6%	7%
West	5%	7%	4%	7%	6%
Northeast	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%
Outside U.S.	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%

Full-time Employment

Respondents who were full-time employed answered additional questions about their employment. Respondents in the military or in post-graduation stipend-paid service positions are excluded from this section.

Respondents were asked to indicate the relationship between their career goals and their full-time employment. The chart below represents a breakdown of respondents who answered “yes” to whether they consider their job to be related to their career goals and/or a path that will allow them to achieve their career goals. The Graduate School and School of Dentistry are omitted due to a low number of respondents.

Table 7. Employment Relationship to Career Goals by College/School and Degree Type

	2020-2021 (n=338)	2021-2022 (n=299)	2022-2023 (n=357)	2023-2024 (n=364)	2024-2025 (n=371)
College					
Arts and Sciences	95%	96%	98%	93%	91%
Business Administration	95%	93%	95%	93%	95%
Communication	100%	100%	100%	89%	100%
Education	97%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Engineering	100%	94%	100%	100%	88%
Health Sciences	96%	100%	99%	97%	95%
Nursing	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%
Overall	97%	97%	98%	96%	95%
Degree Type					
Doctoral	98%	100%	98%	100%	95%
Masters	97%	97%	98%	95%	95%
Certificate	100%	100%	100%	93%	93%
Overall	97%	97%	98%	96%	95%

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Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following categories best describes the type of organization for which they work. The chart below shows a breakdown by college and degree type. The Graduate School and School of Dentistry are omitted due to a low number of respondents.

Table 8. Full-Time Employment Organization Type by College

College	Organization	2020-2021 (N = 72)	2021-2022 (N = 82)	2022-2023 (N = 53)	2023-2024 (N = 42)	2024-2025 (N = 63)
Arts and Sciences	Education	29%	41%	30%	43%	46%
	Government	11%	6%	11%	5%	16%
	Industry	42%	39%	36%	31%	27%
	Not for profit	18%	6%	13%	12%	8%
	Other	0%	7%	9%	10%	3%
Business Administration	Education	11%	9%	11%	9%	10%
	Government	2%	0%	2%	3%	0%
	Industry	81%	83%	78%	77%	85%
	Not for profit	0%	3%	4%	6%	5%
	Other	6%	5%	4%	4%	0%
Communication	Education	21%	0%	0%	22%	50%
	Government	7%	0%	0%	11%	0%
	Industry	50%	80%	75%	33%	50%
	Not for profit	7%	10%	13%	33%	0%
	Other	14%	10%	13%	0%	0%
Education	Education	69%	65%	63%	45%	35%
	Government	0%	2%	2%	6%	6%
	Industry	20%	20%	17%	20%	25%
	Not for profit	11%	9%	13%	18%	26%
	Other	0%	4%	6%	11%	8%
Engineering	Education	21%	14%	17%	24%	22%
	Government	5%	9%	4%	0%	3%
	Industry	74%	77%	75%	76%	66%
	Not for profit	0%	0%	4%	0%	9%
	Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024
Health Sciences		(N = 27)	(N = 50)	(N = 71)	(N = 59)	(N = 56)
	Education	37%	22%	28%	39%	39%
	Government	4%	2%	1%	2%	4%
	Industry	41%	23%	25%	32%	30%
	Not for profit	11%	28%	30%	15%	18%
Other	7%	24%	15%	12%	9%	
Nursing		(N = 116)	(N = 97)	(N = 61)	(N = 67)	(N = 68)
	Education	22%	11%	16%	19%	15%
	Government	4%	0%	3%	3%	3%
	Industry	58%	42%	10%	18%	18%
	Not for profit	11%	42%	61%	49%	54%
Other	4%	4%	10%	10%	10%	

Table 9. Full-Time Employment Organization by Degree Type

Degree Type	Organization	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Doctoral		(N = 66)	(N = 66)	(N = 64)	(N = 66)	(N = 69)
	Education	50%	48%	36%	42%	42%
	Government	6%	3%	3%	0%	3%
	Industry	27%	30%	27%	27%	35%
	Not for profit	12%	15%	27%	23%	16%
Other	5%	3%	8%	8%	4%	
Master's		(N = 322)	(N = 305)	(N = 326)	(N = 299)	(N = 287)
	Education	17%	20%	25%	23%	26%
	Government	4%	2%	3%	5%	6%
	Industry	63%	50%	45%	47%	39%
	Not for profit	11%	19%	18%	17%	22%
Other	4%	9%	8%	8%	7%	
Certificate		(N = 13)	(N = 16)	(N = 11)	(N = 15)	(N = 13)
	Education	8%	38%	18%	33%	15%
	Government	8%	0%	9%	0%	0%
	Industry	85%	50%	36%	27%	31%
	Not for profit	0%	13%	27%	33%	46%
Other	0%	0%	9%	7%	8%	

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The tables below show gross salaries of full-time, non-temporary employed graduates by college and degree type. Respondents in School of Dentistry and Graduate School are excluded due to low headcounts. Salary numbers exclude those active in the military, those in a post-graduation stipend-paid service position, those in a temporary position, and those employed as Medical Scribes.

About 53% of full-time employed respondents reported salary information on the survey (compared with 54% in 2023-2024 and 59% in 2022-2023).

Table 10. Salary Statistics for Full-Time Employed by Degree Type

Degree	Year	Number of Respondents	Starting Salary		
			25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
Doctoral	2020-2021	39	\$53,000	\$70,000	\$84,000
	2021-2022	39	\$56,000	\$76,500	\$119,000
	2022-2023	54	\$72,500	\$80,000	\$105,000
	2023-2024	62	\$65,000	\$82,000	\$120,000
	2024-2025	74	\$62,000	\$75,000	\$100,000
Master's	2020-2021	162	\$55,000	\$66,392	\$100,000
	2021-2022	169	\$57,000	\$67,000	\$92,500
	2022-2023	271	\$55,000	\$70,000	\$90,000
	2023-2024	264	\$56,000	\$70,000	\$85,500
	2024-2025	255	\$60,000	\$72,000	\$90,000
Certificate	2020-2021	-	-	-	-
	2021-2022	-	-	-	-
	2022-2023	9	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	2023-2024	14	\$75,000	\$107,750	\$123,000
	2024-2025	11	\$62,500	\$115,000	\$133,000

Table 11. Salary Statistics for Full-Time Employed by College³

³ Salary information omitted where N<5.

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College	Year	Number of Respondents	Starting Salary		
			25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
Arts and Sciences	2020-2021	28	\$50,000	\$53,500	\$63,892
	2021-2022	33	\$49,900	\$60,000	\$76,500
	2022-2023	41	\$53,000	\$65,000	\$80,000
	2023-2024	40	\$50,500	\$60,000	\$76,500
	2024-2025	55	\$58,000	\$69,000	\$87,000
Business Administration	2020-2021	92	\$59,000	\$85,000	\$113,500
	2021-2022	59	\$63,000	\$77,000	\$100,000
	2022-2023	91	\$65,000	\$76,000	\$120,000
	2023-2024	110	\$67,500	\$80,000	\$125,000
	2024-2025	57	\$68,000	\$80,000	\$105,000
Communication	2020-2021	-	-	-	-
	2021-2022	-	-	-	-
	2022-2023	-	-	-	-
	2023-2024	6	\$50,000	\$52,500	\$59,000
	2024-2025	-	-	-	-
Education	2020-2021	12	\$38,750	\$44,837	\$55,000
	2021-2022	29	\$45,000	\$52,000	\$60,000
	2022-2023	61	\$49,000	\$54,500	\$65,000
	2023-2024	53	\$50,000	\$55,000	\$60,000
	2024-2025	76	\$56,000	\$60,500	\$70,000
Engineering	2020-2021	9	\$75,000	\$85,000	\$90,000
	2021-2022	12	\$58,500	\$77,200	\$98,750
	2022-2023	19	\$75,000	\$80,000	\$90,000
	2023-2024	16	\$71,500	\$82,000	\$110,000
	2024-2025	29	\$70,000	\$83,000	\$100,000
Health Sciences	2020-2021	21	\$68,000	\$55,000	\$76,000
	2021-2022	41	\$62,000	\$76,800	\$100,000
	2022-2023	67	\$60,000	\$76,086	\$95,000
	2023-2024	54	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$77,500
	2024-2025	52	\$61,500	\$71,500	\$81,500
Nursing	2020-2021	34	\$57,000	\$63,200	\$89,000
	2021-2022	36	\$63,000	\$85,500	\$110,500
	2022-2023	48	\$70,000	\$80,000	\$102,000
	2023-2024	59	\$70,000	\$88,000	\$120,000
	2024-2025	64	\$70,000	\$82,500	\$119,000

Graduate and Professional Education

Those pursuing graduate/professional school were asked to indicate the type of degree they are pursuing and the field of study of the degree. The survey also collected the names of the schools, although that information is not included within this report.

About 75% of those pursuing graduate/professional school are pursuing a Doctorate degree. The “Other” category includes degrees such as a Law (J.D.) Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S), Medical degree (M.D., D.O.), Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.), or another professional doctorate or degree or certificate.

Table 12. Degree Pursued by those Continuing Education

Degree Type	2020-2021 (n=40)	2021-2022 (n=30)	2022-2023 (n=33)	2023-2024 (n=34)	2024-2025 (n=40)
Master's degree	23%	3%	9%	18%	8%
Ph.D.	70%	77%	82%	65%	75%
Other	9%	20%	9%	18%	19%

Students pursuing either Master's or Ph.D. degrees were asked to indicate their field of study. Master's degree data is excluded due to low headcounts. The “Other” category in the Doctorate degree category includes fields such as Doctorate of Pediatric Medicine.

Table 13. Field of Study by those Pursuing a Ph.D.

Ph.D.	2020-2021 (n=28)	2021-2022 (n=23)	2022-2023 (n=27)	2023-2024 (n=22)	2024-2025 (n=)
Analytics, Data Science				4%	3%
Arts & Humanities	18%	13%	15%	18%	7%
Sciences	36%	39%	44%	27%	47%
Business	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Communication	4%	4%	4%	0%	10%
Education	11%	4%	4%	9%	7%
Engineering	21%	17%	19%	27%	20%
Other	4%	17%	15%	18%	7%

“Analytics, Data Science” was added as a category in this section for the 2023-2024 cohort.

Seeking Employment and Planning to Continue Education

Graduates who indicated they were either seeking employment or planning to continue education were asked to comment on their job search or graduate/professional program search process. Respondents who reported that they were seeking employment and who responded to this follow-up question (n = 72) had the option to choose from a list of seven options to describe where they were in the process. All respondents who completed the “seeking employment” follow-up questions are included in the charts below, even those who indicated that they were also in another post-graduation outcome category (e.g. employed part-time and seeking employment). Respondents could check all that applied to them; therefore, the percentages across each row will not add up to 100%.

Table 14. Job Search Process Category of Graduates Seeking Employment

Number of Respondents	Year	Job Search Process - Seeking Employment (select all that apply)						
		Applying	Interviewing	Planning to Relocate First	Taking a Gap-Year	Researching Jobs	Have Not Started	Other
26	2020-2021	62%	19%	4%	4%	19%	4%	8%
32	2021-2022	59%	38%	3%	0%	34%	9%	3%
51	2022-2023	65%	29%	4%	0%	24%	10%	2%
52	2023-2024	63%	21%	8%	0%	19%	12%	6%
72	2024-2025	69%	33%	3%	0%	19%	6%	13%

Respondents who reported that they were planning to continue their education and who responded to this follow-up question (n = 21) had the option to choose from a list of seven options to describe where they were in the process. All respondents who completed the “planning to continue education” follow-up questions are included in the charts below, even those who indicated that they were also in another post-graduation outcome category. Respondents could check all that applied to them; therefore, the percentages across each row will not add up to 100%.

Table 15. Program Search Process Category of Graduates Planning to Continue Education

Number of Respondents	Year	Program Search Process - Planning to Continue Education (select all that apply)						Other
		Applied & Waiting to Hear Back	Studying for Tests	Researching Programs	Taking a Gap-Year	Thinking but Not Committed	Applying	
8	2020-2021	0%	0%	38%	0%	38%	38%	25%
12	2021-2022	8%	8%	25%	42%	25%	25%	8%
13	2022-2023	0%	8%	54%	46%	38%	23%	8%
18	2023-2024	11%	0%	39%	28%	28%	39%	6%
21	2024-2025	0%	19%	62%	33%	24%	38%	0%

A Note on Recent Labor Market Trends

The 2025 labor market showed a gradual cooling trend marked by declining job postings and modest compensation growth. Insights drawn from the year's reports by Public Insight Corporation reveal a market that began the year with strong posting volumes before steadily weakening through December. Overall, job postings fell year-over-year across most months and sectors, reflecting slower employer demand. Even when postings rose month-to-month, they typically remained below prior-year levels. Industries such as healthcare, construction, and professional services consistently showed unmet demand, indicating employers struggled to attract candidates despite the broader market slowdown. Technology and information roles were occasional exceptions, showing pockets of continued growth in both postings and compensation.

Job-seeker activity also softened. Resume volume declined for most of the year, signaling a passive talent market in which workers were less inclined to switch jobs. New resume creation in particular lagged, suggesting heightened caution and reduced mobility. This reduced turnover meant fewer available entry-level roles, leaving new graduates competing for a smaller pool of openings. Overall, 2025 was defined by moderating employer demand, limited job-seeker movement, and slow but consistent wage growth, with significant variation by industry.

Discussion

Results from this annual survey are distributed to many campus constituency groups and are used to inform current and future students of first destination post-graduation outcomes.

Results from previous years and results at the undergraduate level can be found at <https://www.marquette.edu/institutional-research-analysis/institutional-surveys.php>.

Data collection procedures follow the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards and protocols for the collection of graduating student initial career outcomes information for undergraduates. Marquette's Career Services Center submits Graduate First Destination Survey outcomes data, aggregated at the major level, to NACE for inclusion in NACE's yearly report on first destination outcomes, including national hiring and continuing education trends.

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