



مسح الخريجين
Graduate Survey



EFQM

Committed to Excellence
2019



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Higher Education

Executive Summary of Graduate Survey 2019

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Graduate Survey 2019 is one of the national surveys within the series of surveys implemented by the Graduate Survey Department in the Ministry of Higher Education. This survey represents the third version of the graduate survey that the department conducts every two years to track the graduates since their graduation and their involvement in the labor market. It was implemented during the period of (1- 31) January 2019.

This survey aims to assess the level of higher education graduates in terms of possessing knowledge, skills and competencies that qualify graduates to move to the labor market. It also aims to know the compatibility of programs and specializations offered in higher education institutions with the requirements of the labor market. It explores the relationship between higher education outcomes, and the requirements of joining the labor market in terms of specializations, capabilities and skills, and employing that in developing the higher education sector in the Sultanate.

The survey targeted graduates of the academic year 2016/2017 (one year and six months after graduation), and the academic year 2017/2018 (six months after graduation); to build a database of the largest possible number of former graduates that includes data of a total of six academic years since the beginning of the first graduate survey 2015. Thus, this data can be relied upon to obtain indicators closer to reality about the graduates' employment status and the knowledge, skills and competencies they possess.

The 2019 Graduate Survey targeted graduates of all higher education institutions from within the Sultanate, and Omani graduates from educational institutions outside the Sultanate. The total number of the targeted population was (57,090) with diploma, bachelors, master and doctoral qualifications.

During the implementation of the survey, a daily monitoring of the percentage of participants was observed aiming to achieve the largest possible overall response rate. The overall response rate in this survey approached (57.0%), which exceeded the response rate recorded in the previous two surveys in 2015 and 2017, which achieved a response rate of (34.0%), and (42.0%), respectively.

The methodology of the survey relied on quantitative research using an electronic questionnaire to reach the largest possible segment of the targeted population. The questionnaire was available on the website of the graduate survey www.ogss.gov.om.

The survey collected data on different topics such as the skills that the graduates acquired from their study, the skills required by the labor market, the employment status, what methods the employed graduates followed to get their first job after graduation, the quality of services provided by the Higher Education Institutions for their students, and practical training that graduates obtained before and after graduation. The graduates' data from the central database in the Ministry of Higher Education was used for the first time in graduate surveys to collect the personal data of the graduates. This data which extracted from the central database was then matched with data in the Directorate General of Civil Status records and then reviewed by the higher education institutions for validation.

This personal data was then combined with the electronic questionnaire, so that the data of the questions related to personal data were automatically recorded in order to reduce the number of questions of the questionnaire. The other remaining questions of the questionnaire were then modified to suit the desired goals the graduates survey.

The following are the most prominent results related to undergraduates (i.e. holders of Vocational-Diploma, Diploma, Advanced-Diploma, and Bachelor degrees):

□ The results indicated that the percentage of employed graduates was (18.5%) of the total participating graduates, as shown in Figure (1). This represents a decrease of (6.3%) as compared to the 2017 Graduates Survey when the employment rate was (24.8%). As for job seekers, their percentage in this survey was (77.4%), which represents an increase of (12.3%) compared to the previous survey in 2017, when this percentage was at (65.1%). These results could be partially attributed to the economic crisis due to the low oil prices experienced by the countries of the region, especially the GCC Countries. However, it should be noted as it was highlighted in the previous studies of graduates survey that based on the international standards, the graduate employment rates in the Sultanate - even before the economic crisis - are considered low. This necessitates the need of conducting a realistic study to explore the current situations of both the labor market and education considering the following: (1) retraining graduates to be absorbed by the labor market, (2) upgrading their productivity and skills to be able to compete locally and internationally, (3) diversifying educational pathways to

conform to the labor market needs, and (4) gradually changing the economy into knowledge-based economy that absorbs qualified skilled labor.

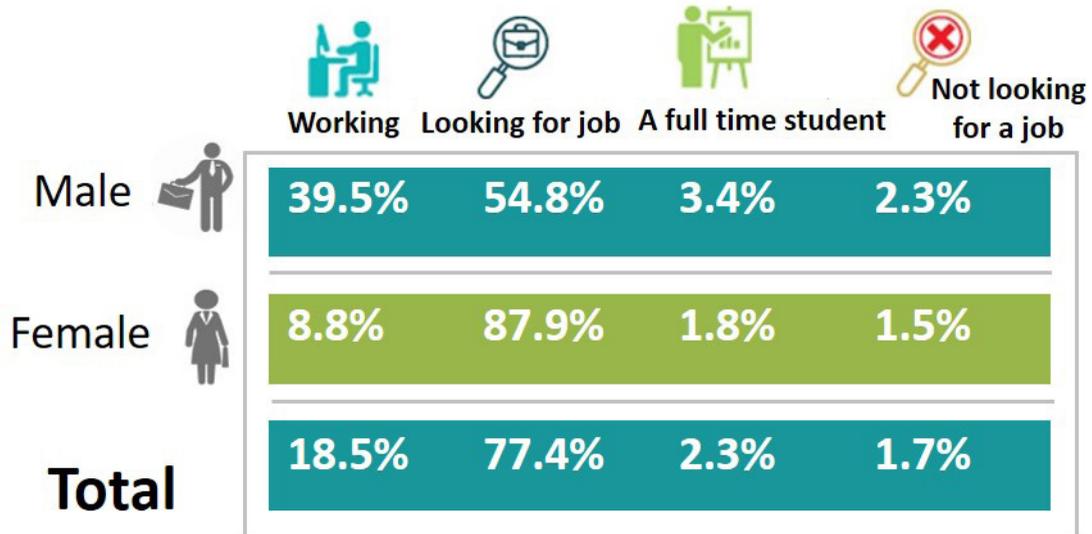


Figure (1) Distribution of Under-Graduate Participants by Employment Status and Gender

□ The percentage of employment among female graduates continues to decrease compared to males, it reached (8.8%) for females compared to (39.5%) for males. The low employment rate of females is among the big challenges facing the Omani economy. Despite the fact that Higher Education in Oman provides equal opportunities for both genders - usually the number of female students is higher than the number of males in higher education, however, the opposite occurs when it comes the labor market; females are employed in lower numbers compared to males. Therefore, early intervention programs must be implemented (1) to educate females about career prospects that hire more females, (2) improving female capabilities and skills in searching and obtaining jobs at university level, (3) raising awareness about opportunities in the private sectors to increase its popularity among females, (4) increasing female entrepreneurs, and (5) decreasing the causes of female refusal of job offers (e.g. inappropriateness of the workplace).

□ The results of the study indicated that the employment status of the graduates varies according to their field of study. The results showed that graduates of education field came in the first place in terms of the employment rate by (33.6%), followed by the graduates of engineering and related technology with a percentage (25.6%), and then the graduates of the management and commerce in the third place with a rate of (20.6%). On the other hand, the lowest em-

employment rate was among graduates of Agriculture, Environmental and Related Sciences with (6.0%).

□ The results indicated, as shown in Table 1, that the private sector exceeded the public sector- for the first time since the Graduate Survey Department has started the studies of graduates survey- in employing all graduates of all qualifications. This was not the case in the 2015 and 2017 graduates surveys, as the public sector was employing higher number of graduates holding bachelor degrees compared to the number employed in private sector. This gives indications that the private sector will lead the employment of graduates at the national level during the next coming stages. The private sector was able to employ (83.1%), (78.7%), and (63.5%) of the holders of Bachelor, Advanced-Diploma, Diploma and Vocational-Diploma degrees in 2019 survey compared to (53.2%), (56.9%), and (54.6%) respectively in the 2017 survey.

The results also showed that (3.4%) of those who hold a bachelor’s degree and were able to get a job in the public sector, have also created their own businesses at the same time, and this percentage represents twice what was the case in the 2017 graduates survey.

Sector \ Qualification		Qualification			
		Vocational Diploma	Diploma	Advance Diploma	Bachelor
	Public sector	43.2%	34.4%	18.1%	11.9%
	Private sector	53.4%	63.5%	78.7%	83.1
	Own business	0%	0.3%	1.6%	0%
	Public sector and have an Own business	3.4%	0.7%	0.5%	3.4%
	Private sector and have an Own business	1.7%	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%

Figure (2) Distribution of Under-Graduate Participants by Employment Sector and Qualification

□ Figure (2) indicates the distribution of employed graduates according to the time taken to obtain the first job opportunity. It is clear that the highest percentage (36.0%) of employed graduates succeeded in obtaining the first job opportunity after 3 months of their graduation, and (17.0%) Of them were successful to get this opportunity from four to six months after graduation; meaning that (53.0%) of the employed graduates succeeded in obtaining the first job opportunity within the first six months after graduation. Many studies confirmed that the first six months after graduation is the best period to join the labor market.

It is also noted that (24.1%) of employed graduates took more than a year to obtain the first job opportunity after graduation. These results are similar to the results of previous two surveys (2015 and 2017) in terms of the period it took the employed graduates get the first job opportunity.

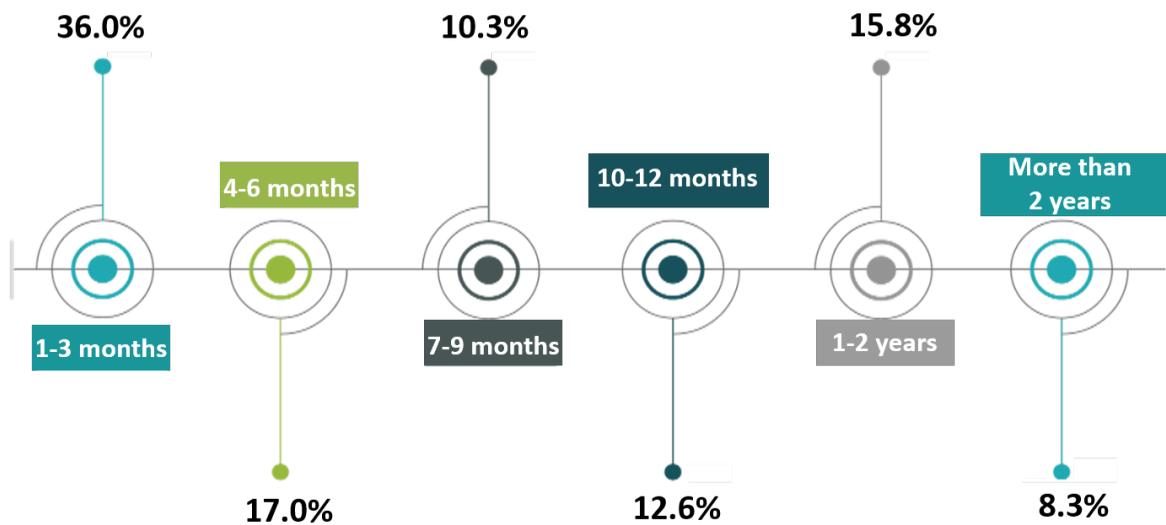


Figure (3) Distribution of Employed Graduates by period to get a first job opportunity

□ The results indicated that the most prominent reasons preventing graduates from obtaining a job opportunity after graduation are as follows:

1. The unavailability of job opportunities matching the specializations of the graduates.
2. The conditions of the job in terms of the required experience are not compatible with the experience of the graduate, i.e. many job opportunities require high level of years of experience.
3. The graduate was not called for a personal interview after applying for the job.

4. The inappropriateness of the workplace for the graduate.

□ On the other hand, the most prominent four factors helped the employed graduates in obtaining a job are:

1. The marketing efforts made by the HEI for their graduates in the recruitment exhibitions.

2. The role of government agencies in providing job opportunities for the graduates.

3. The international experiences the graduates gained through exchange of student visits and mutual training with international universities.

4. The training programs offered for the graduates during their studies in higher education institutions.

It is interesting to note that these factors differed completely from the factors mentioned by the graduates in the 2017 survey. The overall GPA at graduation, specialization, and the personality of the graduate are no longer among the factors that helped for obtaining a job in this survey as it was the case in the 2017 graduates survey.

Thus, these results necessitate that Higher Education Institutions should increase their efforts in marketing for their graduates, and give more attention to training programs for their students in various institutions and companies in labor market, as well as focusing on international experiences to exchange their students with well-known international universities outside the Sultanate.

□ The results of this survey confirmed that the Governorate of Muscat continues to attract the highest percentage of employed graduates. This highlights the importance of having a balanced geographical distribution for the investments and financial projects to be in all the Governorates of the Sultanate not just in Muscat Governorate. Thus, these investments and projects will be able to absorb the growing number of graduates of various qualifications and specialties from one-side and reduce the intensity and growing mobility to Muscat from the other side.

□ A comparison of skills/competencies gained from Higher Education to those needed in the labor market indicated that there was a need to improve the students' skills in English language, and analytical and organizational skills such as problem solving and time management abilities, ability to analyze, ability to deal with work pressure, accuracy and attention to details. This finding is in line with the findings of Employer Survey 2016.

□ The results of the graduates' evaluation of the services provided by their higher education institutions indicated that the highest satisfaction rates were given for: the availability of the study plan for the program, and the availability of resources and references in the library. On the other hand, the lowest satisfaction rates were given for: (1) training opportunities in the workplace, (2) opportunities to deliver opinions and suggestions to the top management of the institution, (3) opportunities to participate in the academic events.

For more detailed results, please visit our website www.ogss.gov.om. The full Report is currently available in Arabic only.



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