Charles Sturt University Institution Report

Introduction

The Graduate Pathways Survey (GPS) was conducted for the first time in 2008. It secured responses from nearly 10,000 Australian university graduates who had completed their bachelor degree in 2002.

The Graduate Pathways Survey provides new insights on the outcomes of Australian university education:

- It provides a longer term (five year) outlook on graduate outcomes.
- It helps monitor outcomes and satisfaction.
- It offers important information about how graduates' degrees are related to their work and/or study one, three and five years after graduation.
- It assists universities examine their graduate outcomes against nationally comparable benchmarks.

The survey collected detailed information relating to graduates' perception of their degree, relevance of their study to their careers, and their educational and workforce participation over the five years following completion of their bachelor degree.

In total, 39 Australian universities took part in the survey.

The survey was funded by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The design, collection and analysis of the survey were undertaken by Drs Hamish Coates and Daniel Edwards at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Further information can be found at http://www.acer.edu.au/gps/context.html.

About this report

This Institution Report provides information about the graduates of Charles Sturt University who participated in the GPS. It provides details on response numbers, measures of satisfaction, and participation in further study and work. National averages are given to act as a benchmark for the institutional results.

An outline of the data contained in the tables and figures provided in this report is given at the start of each section. It is important to note that the figures provided in this report are based on institutional and national averages. Small response rates and response sizes can impact on the accuracy of the information provided in collections such as this. As such, caution is advised in the interpretation of the institution-level figures in this report.

For detailed information about the variables used here, collection methods and data interpretation advice, please refer to the GPS national report which can be found at http://www.acer.edu.au/gps.

Response numbers

The GPS was distributed in mid 2008. Its target population was domestic bachelor degree graduates who completed their degree at an Australian university in 2002. A national response rate of 12.1 per cent was secured. Details pertaining to response numbers for your institution are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 2008 GPS response numbers and share by sex and field of education

		Number	Percent
Respondent sex	Male	62	25.4
	Female	182	74.6
Broad field of education	Natural and physical sciences	3	1.2
	Information technology	20	8.0
	Engineering and related technologies	0	0.0
	Architecture and building	0	0.0
	Agriculture and environmental studies	23	9.2
	Health	65	26.1
	Education	51	20.5
	Management and commerce	34	13.7
	Society and culture	44	17.7
	Creative arts	9	3.6
Total responses from institution		251	
Size of institution's target population		2,034	
Response rate for institution			12.3
National response rate (all universities)			12.1

Graduates' backgrounds

The GPS examines the background of graduates by asking a number of questions that are not traditionally measured by institutions or government when examining graduate characteristics. Three particularly unique characteristics are displayed in Figure 1. The proportion of graduate respondents who grew up in a regional or remote area and the proportion of graduates who grew up in a low socioeconomic area are shown in the first two sets of bars in the figure below. These measures were derived by asking the graduates to state the postcode and locality in which they lived at the end of their primary school years. The third variable in Figure 1 shows the proportion of graduates for whom neither parent had a university qualification. Institutional and national figures are displayed.

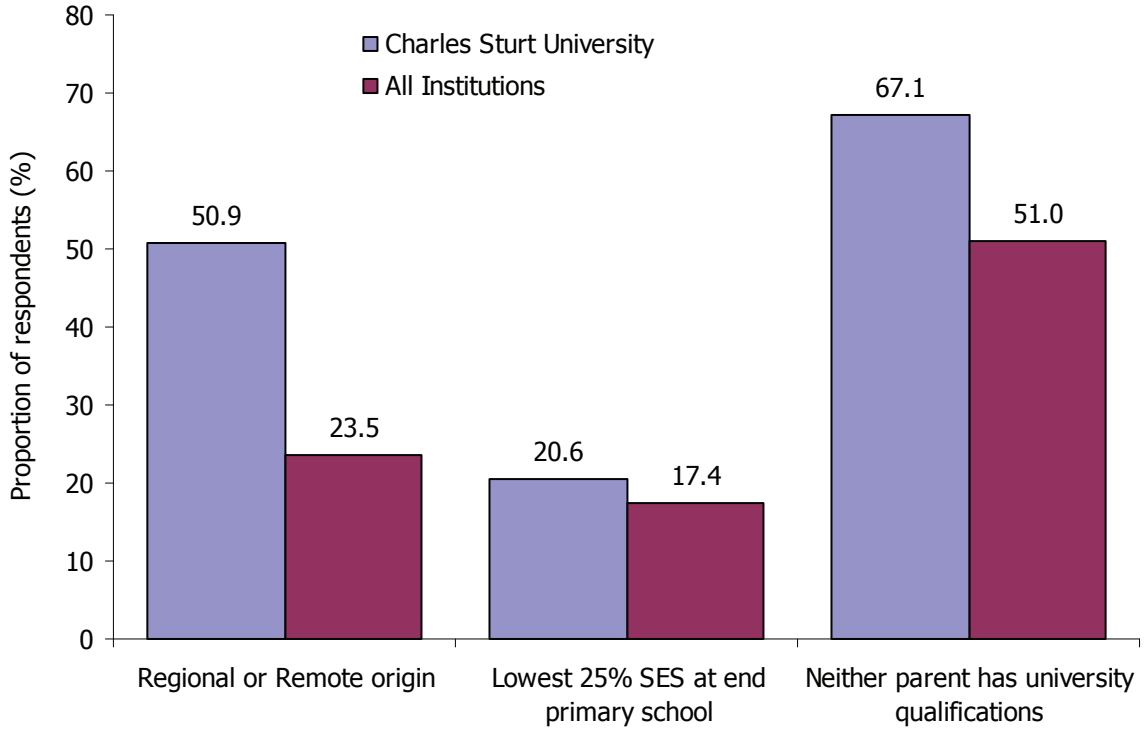


Figure 1 Graduates' background characteristics

Education outcomes

A range of education outcomes were measured in the GPS. Responses were collated and are presented here in two separate scales. These scales have a score ranging from 0 to 100. General Learning Outcomes were measured according to graduate responses relating to development of writing, speaking skills, analytical skills, job-related skills and use of information technology. General Development Outcomes were examined through questions about interaction with students from different backgrounds, relating class work to 'real-world' situations, developing an understanding of different social concepts and appropriating an awareness of relevant industry needs. The education outcomes for this institution and the national average for all institutions are displayed in Figure 2.

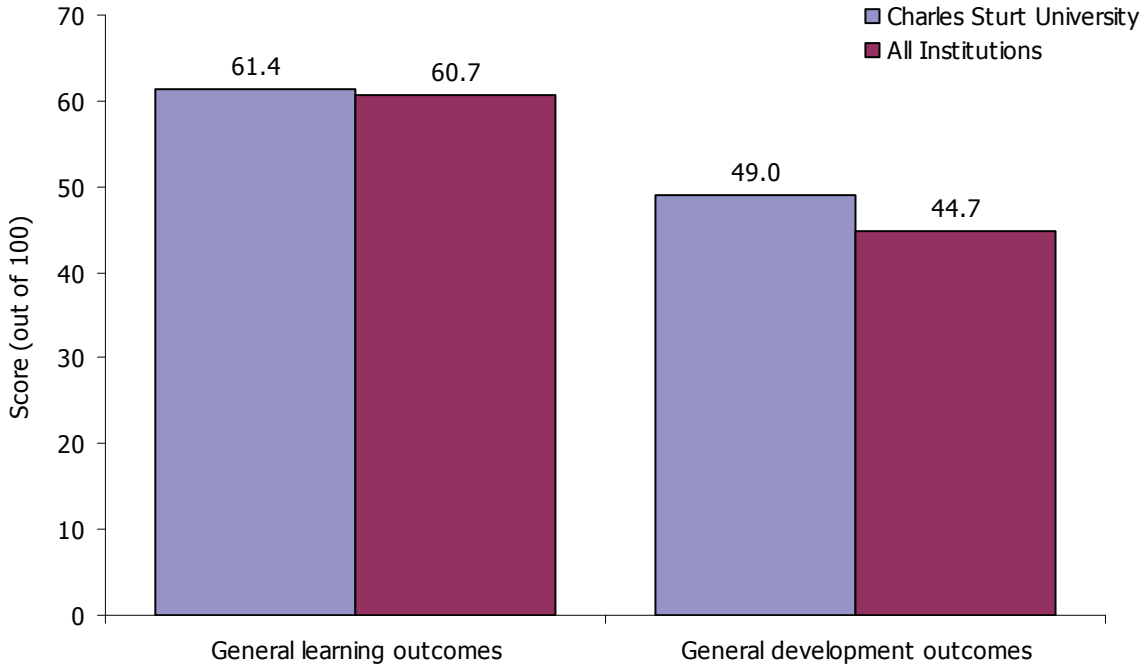


Figure 2 Graduate self assessment of outcomes from the bachelor degree they completed in 2002, means score of GPS respondents

Education and employment pathways

The GPS sought to trace graduates' work and study pathways over the five years after they had completed university. Graduates were asked to provide information about the types of work and study they were engaged in at one, three and five years after graduation (i.e. in 2003, 2005 and 2008). In addition, respondents were asked to record their gross annual salary at each of these points in time.

Graduate activity over the five years following completion for this university is shown in Figure 3. Figure 4 compares the work and study situation of this university's graduates in their fifth year out with the national average. Table 2 shows the range of occupations of employed graduates in 2008 five years after graduation. It lists the most common occupations for all institutions. Table 3 provides an indication of the industries in which graduates were employed at this time. Figure 5 charts the median salaries at one, three and five years after graduation, along with a national comparison.

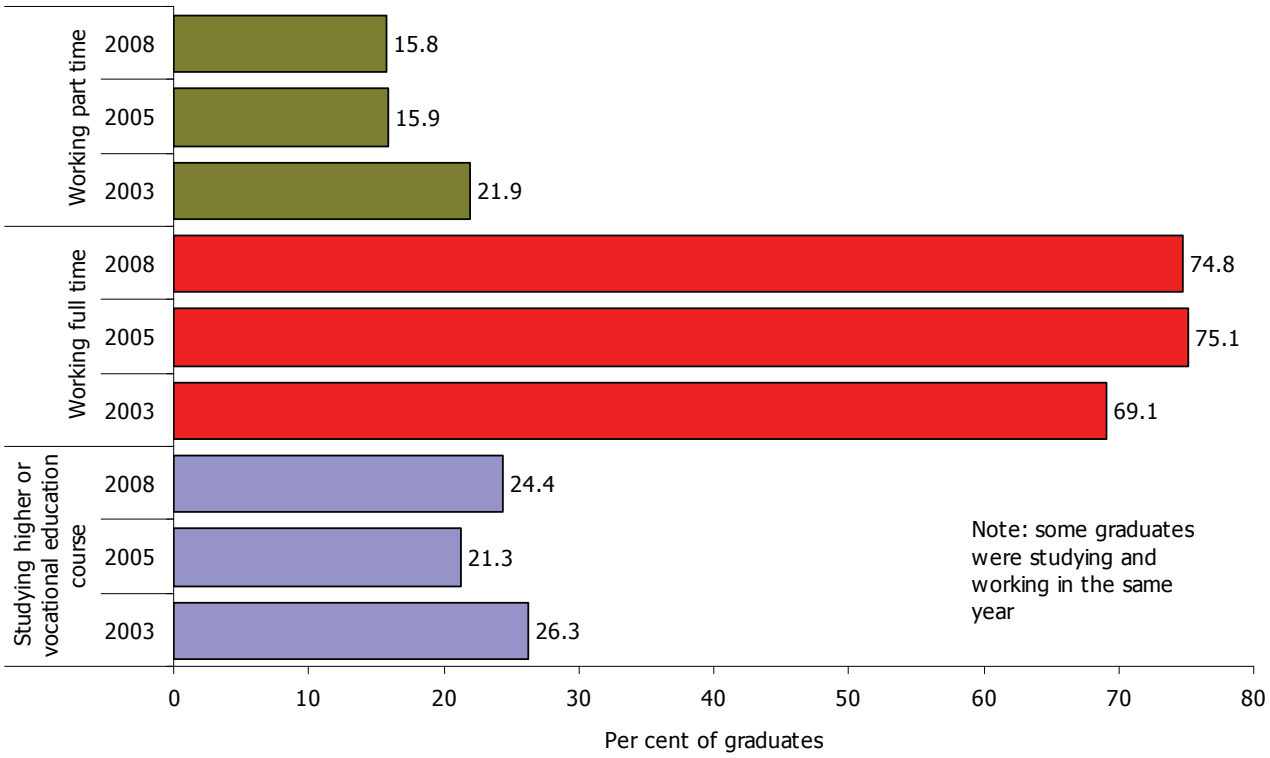


Figure 3 Proportion of graduates from this institution in work or study, one, three and five years following graduation

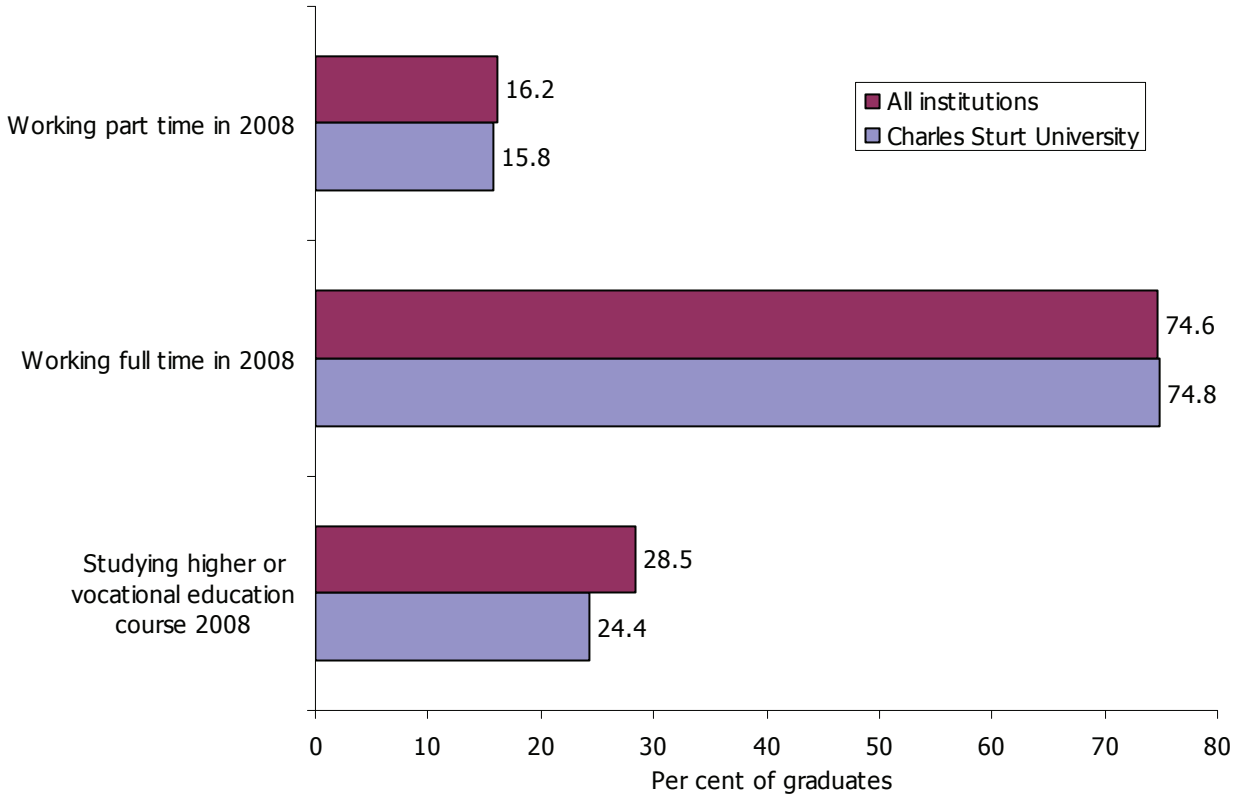


Figure 4 Per cent of graduates in study and employment five years following graduation, national comparison

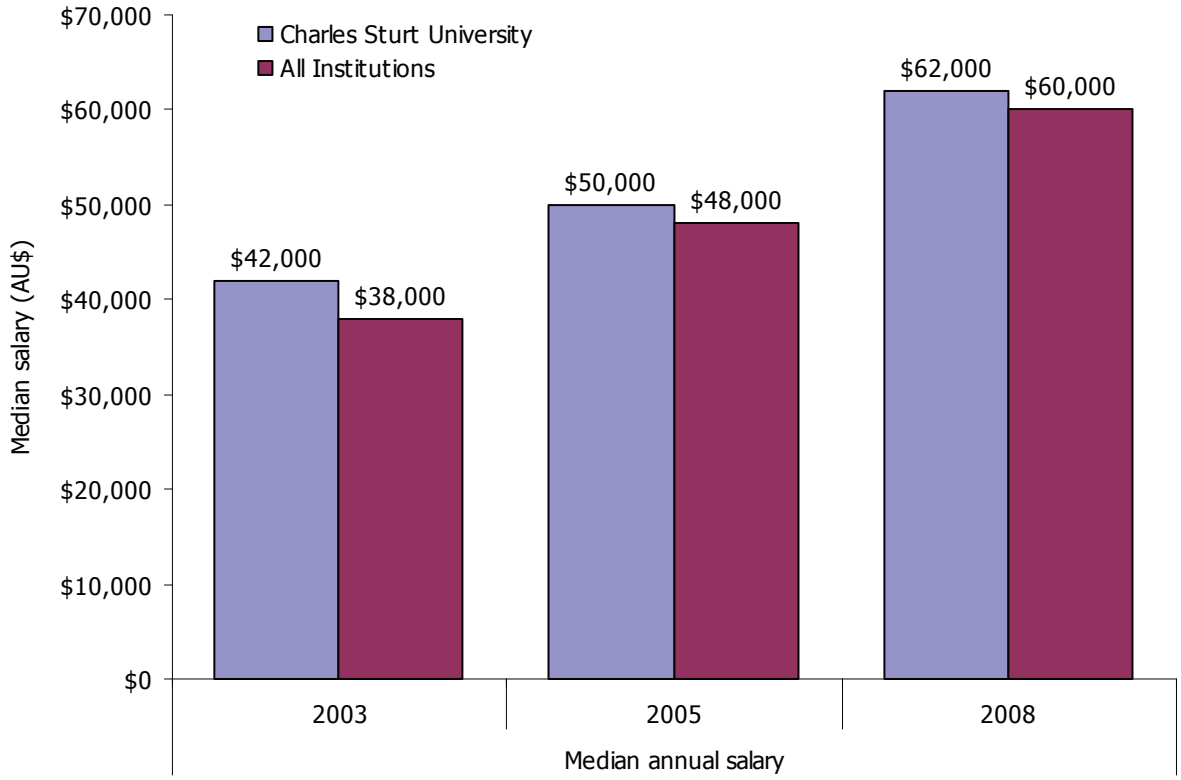
Table 2 Occupation type of employed graduates, five years after graduation (per cent)

Occupation type[1]	*Charles Sturt University*	All Institutions
Education Professionals	22.6	20.7
Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals	1.9	9.1
Health Professionals	12.8	8.1
Health and Welfare Support Workers	13.4	8.0
Specialist Managers	5.6	7.7
Numerical Clerks	8.1	7.6
Legal, Social and Welfare Professionals	3.4	6.9
Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	4.1	5.1
Office Managers and Program Administrators	2.5	3.8
Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians	2.9	2.1
Arts and Media Professionals	4.8	1.8
Other Clerical and Administrative Workers	0.7	1.8
Clerical and Office Support Workers	1.8	1.8
General Clerical Workers	1.7	1.6
Inquiry Clerks and Receptionists	0.0	1.4
Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators	1.8	1.3
ICT Professionals	0.4	1.1
Sales Assistants and Salespersons	0.4	0.9
Personal Assistants and Secretaries	0.4	0.9
Other occupations	10.5	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0

[1] Most common occupations for all institutions

Table 3 Industry of work for employed graduates, five years after graduation (per cent)

Industry of work	*Charles Sturt University*	All Institutions
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.8	1.0
Mining	0.0	2.0
Manufacturing	7.6	5.2
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.7	1.0
Construction	0.0	2.6
Wholesale Trade	0.8	0.3
Retail Trade	2.4	2.6
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	2.4	0.9
Transport and Storage	0.4	1.3
Communication Services	0.4	0.7
Finance and Insurance	7.5	9.0
Property and Business Services	5.5	10.6
Government Administration and Defence	7.9	10.3
Education	24.3	24.2
Health and Community Services	36.7	23.8
Cultural and Recreational Services	0.7	2.6
Personal and Other Services	0.0	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0



Note: The median salary is based on graduates who were employed either full time or part time

Figure 5 Median salary of employed graduates one, three and five years following graduation

Relevance of degree to career

In addition to their work and study situations over the five years after completion of their bachelor degree, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied with their work, the relevance of their degree to their occupation, the extent to which the degree prepared them for their work and the level of benefit they derived from their qualification in their job.

Graduates were asked to record this information in relation to their situation at one, three and five years following graduation. This institution's responses for each of the years have been displayed on a metric ranging from 0 to 100 in Figure 6 and comparisons of outcomes in the fifth year with the national average are shown in Figure 7.

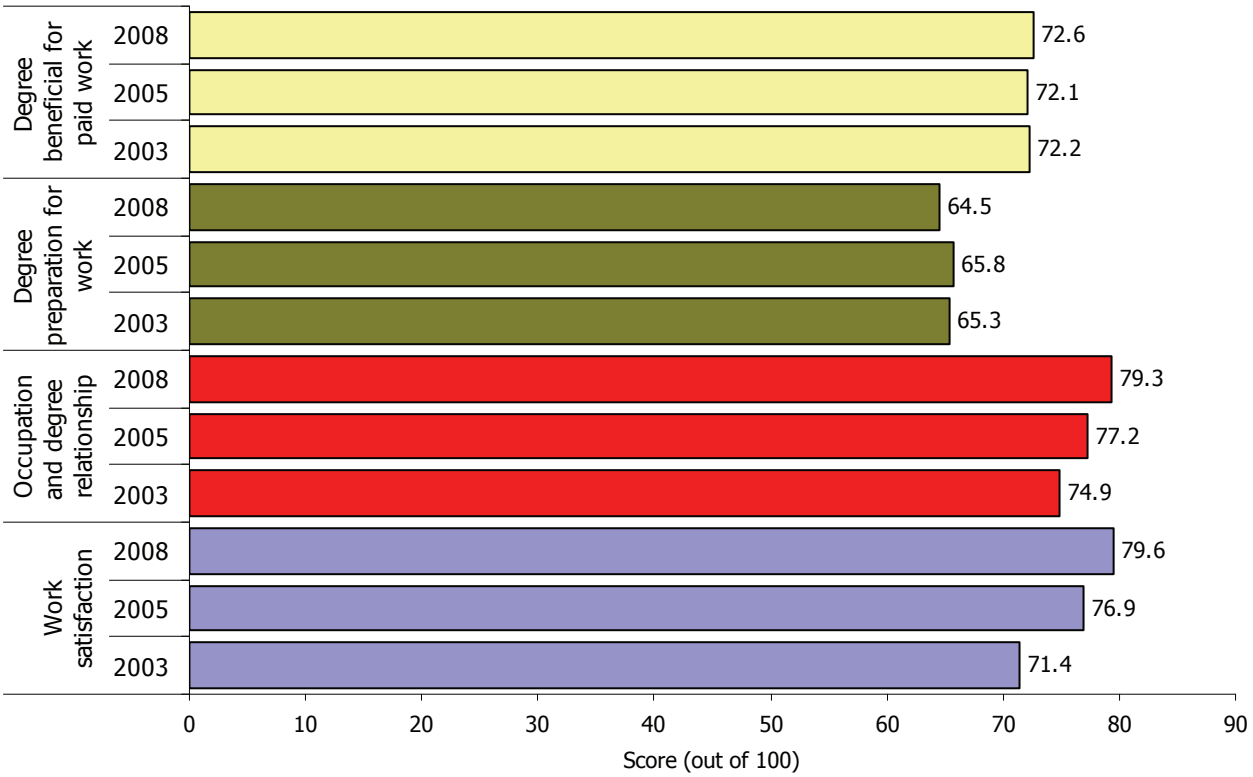


Figure 6 Relevance of degree to occupation, one, three and five years following graduation, graduates from this institution

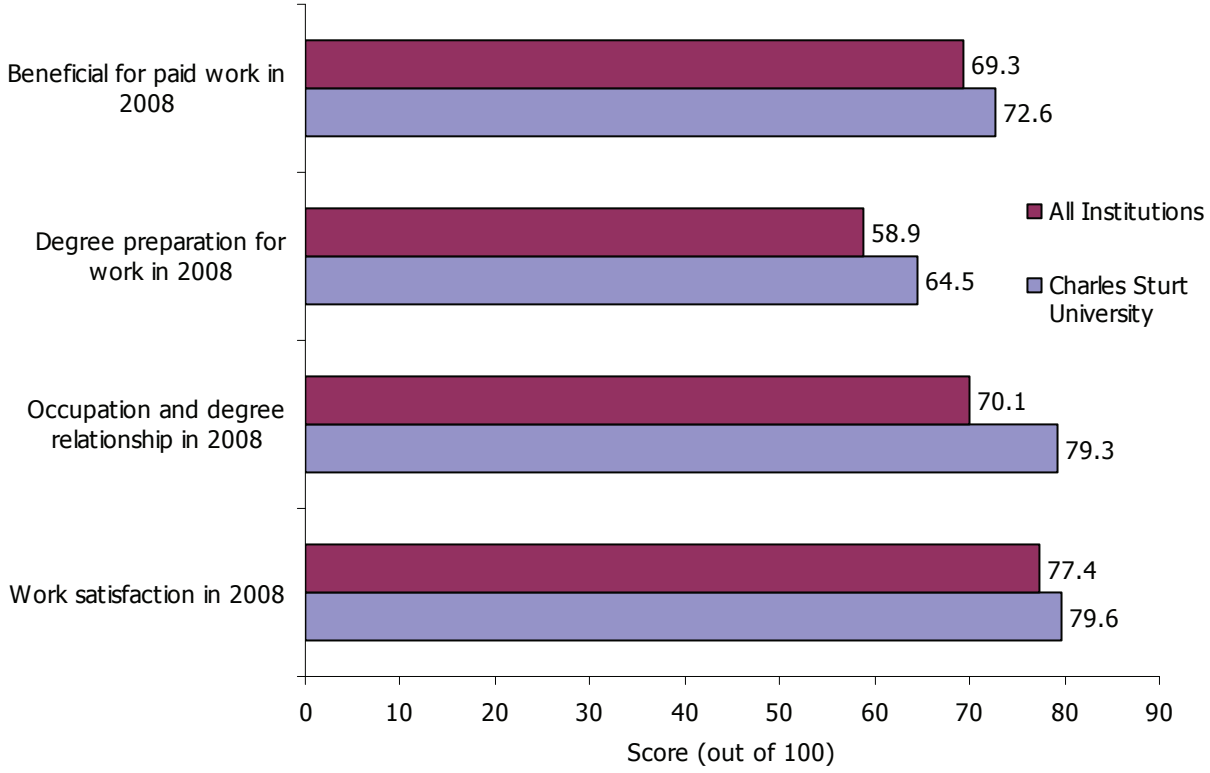


Figure 7 Relevance of degree to occupation five years following graduation, national comparisons

Quality assessment and satisfaction

In the GPS, graduate respondents were asked to rate a number of areas in relation to their university experience and overall satisfaction. These rates are displayed on a metric from 0 to 100 (with 0 indicating a poor level of satisfaction and 100 an excellent level of satisfaction). The university and the national average outcomes are presented in Figure 8.

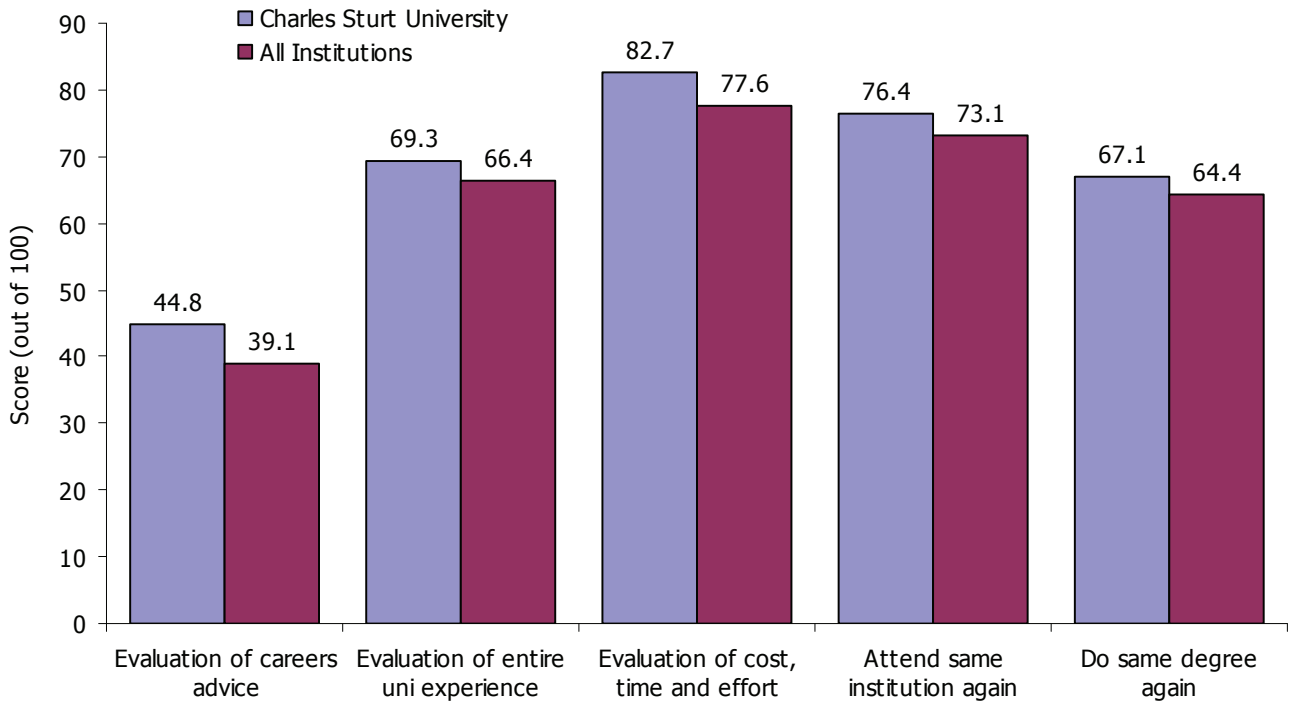


Figure 8 Mean scores on course evaluation and satisfaction scales

Areas for improvement of bachelor degree

One section of the GPS asked graduates to evaluate the relative importance of a number of facets of their bachelor degree. Questions in this section were combined to create four scales relating to suggestions of areas for improvement, they are: Enhance Learning Contexts; Enhance the Focus of Education; Enhance Staff and Teaching; and Enhance Student Engagement. These scales are displayed in Figure 9 on a metric of 0 to 100. A low score indicates that graduates saw little need for improvement, while a high score reveals that graduates saw that substantial improvement was required. Institutional and national averages are provided here for comparative purposes.

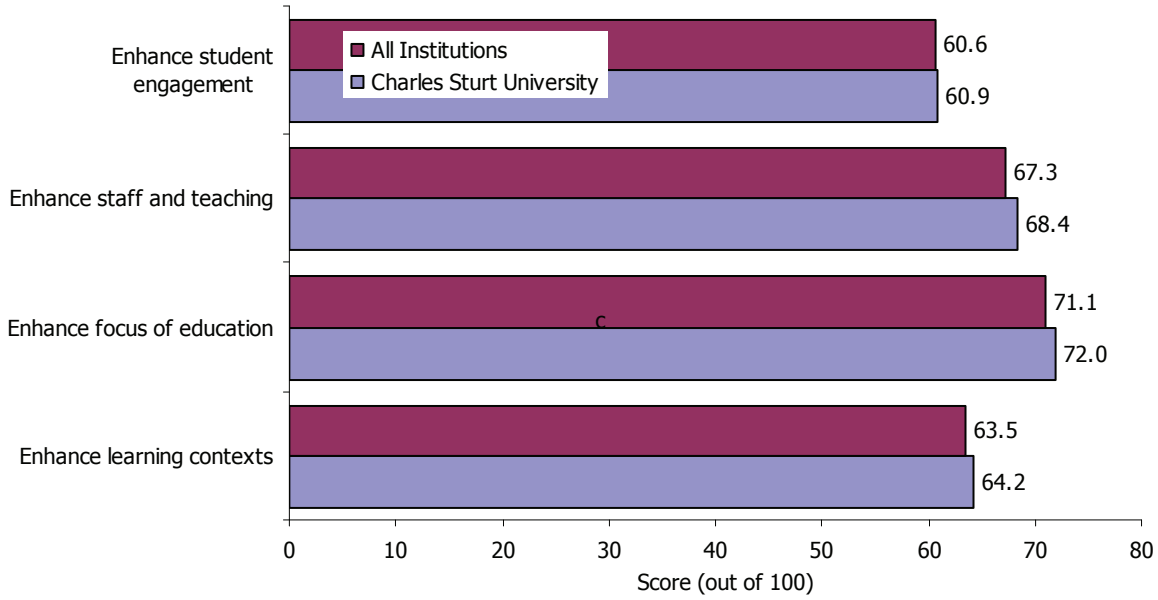


Figure 9 Mean scores for scales relating to ways in which the bachelor degree could be improved

Using this report

As noted in the introduction, the 2008 GPS was designed to secure national rather than institution level estimates. While numbers can cast an allure of certainty, the results presented in this report are based on a relatively small portion of your institution's 2002 graduate population. All results should be treated with caution, and this caution should be factored into any subsequent reporting or dissemination of these results.

The report illustrates the powerful perspectives that can be provided by looking at graduate destinations five years down the track. Such insights can be linked with and used to triangulate information captured via other collections such as the Australian Graduate Survey, Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) or institution-specific collections. As such, information from the GPS can expand insights that are available on the characteristics and enhancement of university education in Australia.

Results from collections such as the GPS can be used in a range of ways to inform each institution's continuous improvement cycle. ACER can provide additional information to institutions on effective strategies for using information from student and graduate surveys. Your feedback on this report is also welcomed – please email gps@acer.edu.au.