# Career Outcomes of Graduates 2004

## *A Career Guidance Tool*

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**Office of the Registrar**

in collaboration with the

**Centre for Labour Studies,**

**University of Malta**

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# Acronyms and Definitions

**Acronyms:**

***Faculties and Institutes***

*Arts* = Faculty of Arts

*CCT* = Centre for Communication Technology

*CLS* = Centre for Labour Studies

*Education* = Faculty of Education

*Engineering* = Faculty of Engineering

*FEMA* = Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy

*IHC* = Institute of Health Care

*IT* = Board of Studies for Information Technology

*Laws* = Faculty of Laws

*Medicine & Surgery* = Faculty of Medicine and Surgery

*Science* = Faculty of Science

***Courses***

B.Accty. (Hons) = Bachelor of Accountancy Honours

B.Com (Hons) = Bachelor of Commerce Honours

B.Com = Bachelor of Commerce

B.Communications (Hons) = Bachelor of Communications Honours

B.Communications = Bachelor of Communications

B.E & A (Hons) = Bachelor of Engineering and Architecture Honours

B.Ed (Hons) = Bachelor of Education Honours

B.Eng (Hons) = Bachelor of Engineering Honours

B.Pharm (Hons) = Bachelor of Pharmacy Honours

B.Psy (Hons) = Bachelor of Psychology Honours

B.Psy = Bachelor of Psychology

BA = Bachelor of Arts *(Faculty of Arts)*

BA (Hons) = Bachelor of Arts Honours (*Faculty of Arts)*

BA (Hons) Soc Work = Bachelor of Arts Honours in Social Work

B.Sc (Bus & Comp) = Bachelor of Science in Business and Computing

B.Sc (Hons) = Bachelor of Science Honours (*Faculty of Science*)

B.Sc (Hons) Com. Therapy = Bachelor of Science Honours in Communication Therapy

B.Sc (Hons) IT = Bachelor of Science Honours in Information Technology

B.Sc (Hons) Med. Lab Science = Bachelor of Science Honours in Medical Laboratory Science

B.Sc (Hons) Nursing = Bachelor of Science Honours in Nursing

B.Sc (Hons) Physiotherapy = Bachelor of Science Honours in Physiotherapy

B.Sc (Hons) Radiography = Bachelor of Science Honours in Radiography

LLD = Doctor of Laws

MD = Doctor of Medicine and Surgery

PGCE = Post Graduate Certificate in Education

***Others***

ETC = Employment and Training Corporation
FOI = Malta Federation of Industry
GWU = General Workers' Union
n.a. = not available
NCPE = National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women
NSO = National Statistics Office
SAS = Students Advisory Services
UHM = Union Haddiema Maghqudin

**Definitions:**

Unless otherwise stated, the term:

a. "graduates" comprise all those who were conferred with their academic awards from the University during the graduation ceremonies held in November 2004. This includes people obtaining certificates, diplomas, bachelors, LLDs, masters and PhDs.

b. "study" consists of study, research, or training.

c. "post-graduate study" means any study, research or training carried out after graduates were conferred with their academic award in November 2004.

# PREFACE

Employability on graduation and over the long term is, understandably, the major priority for the vast majority of our University students. Over the past two decades or so the University has increasingly offered a wide spectrum of higher education courses that have provided students with the necessary tools enabling them to develop their employability skills, to heighten their own awareness of these skills and to improve their ability to articulate them. These skills, once acquired, of course need to be honed throughout one's working life, being put into practice not only in job searching and during interviews but also in personal development planning and in making the most of work experience opportunities. There is no doubt that a student's life long learning capability and therefore his/her employability are enhanced through their university experience. The core mission of our University continues to be the creation of an open space of higher learning within a life-long perspective. This is based on equity of access and should be seen as an opportunity for individual development, allowing all those capable of benefiting from higher education to integrate better into the global knowledge society.

The impact of the effects of widening participation in higher education, with a twelve fold increase in the number of students that have graduated in the last twenty years, from 216 in 1985 to 2591 this year, may now be appreciated by all. Today, perhaps as never before, it has become imperative for careful and informed career guidance to be provided for students seeking access into our institutions of higher education. A few years back the University had approached the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) offering it office space to enable its officers to provide advice to our students on campus. Unfortunately, although agreement had been reached, the ETC was not in a position to spare the personnel required to run this service.

Likewise, it has been University policy to seek to strengthen existing links and to create new bridges with the world of work. The University has repeatedly and publicly requested industry to let it know what its needs are going to be in the immediate and long term. Attempts have been made to instil a pro-industry attitude at the University. Better communications with all interested parties, including the Malta Federation of Industry, the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Malta Enterprise are continuously being sought.

Empirical work on economic growth has consistently shown that improvement in human capital is a major contributor towards productivity gains. Our society is fast approaching the point at which the economy, so far still based, to a certain extent, on traditional capital and labour production, gives way to an economy mainly based on the production and sale of knowledge and services. The knowledge–based

economy has brought into sharper focus the reality that productivity improvements and education are directly interrelated. The University is an institution whose 'production' is based precisely on knowledge and should therefore come to occupy a strategic role of even greater significance.

The University graduates tracer study which the Students Advisory Services has drawn up in collaboration with the University Centre for Labour Studies with the help of Euroguidance Malta provides us with invaluable information as to what is happening to our new graduates when they seek to join the world of work. All stake holders in the field should now be in a better position to plan their future career guidance services whilst at the same time seeking to anticipate the future needs of the country, putting in place those mechanisms necessary to train future graduates needed to satisfy these requirements. All those who have collaborated in this study are to be warmly congratulated.

**PROFESSOR ROGER ELLUL-MICALLEF**
**RECTOR**
**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

# FOREWORD

Any country's future success is intricately linked with its investment in human capital. A nation that looks to developing economic growth, as well as, providing an environment where its citizens have the possibility to develop to their full potential must analyse, reflect and have a clear strategy of how to create an environment which provides employment opportunities and greater social cohesion. A dynamic knowledge-based economy requires a skilled and adaptable work force.

The study presented in this document provides a useful and essential tool when it comes to policy design and development in both the spheres of education and employment; two sectors that are welded and complementary. A close analysis of the findings leads one to conclude that the role of career guidance is a crucial and vital aspect of any person's career path. Career guidance creates the possibility for a person to identify capacities, competences and interests that will lead to making appropriate educational, training and occupational decisions.

Guidance provision within the education and training system, and especially at school level, plays an essential role in ensuring that individuals' educational and career decisions help them develop effective self-management of their learning and career paths.

Career guidance can provide significant support to individuals during their transition between levels and sectors of education and training systems and from school to adult and working life; to young people re-entering education or training after leaving school early**;** to persons re-entering the labour market after periods of voluntary or involuntary unemployment, or homemaking; to workers where sectoral restructuring requires them to change the nature of their employment; and to older workers and migrants.

Career planning is not instinctive and automatic. Many young people do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make a successful transition from school to the world of work. Young people must be provided with information and taught basic knowledge, skills and attitudes to facilitate a smooth journey from one stage of development to another.

My Ministry has put the issue of career guidance on the agenda for analysis and review. In fact, a working group is currently drafting a policy document for discussion. We are sure that the time is ripe for the development of a government policy and strategy for primary and secondary schools. Students should not leave compulsory education without a clear vision of the world of higher education and work. In line with EU targets, the percentage of early Maltese school leavers needs to drop considerably in the following years. Students need to be better equipped to

choose from the ever-expanding higher education opportunities both in Malta and abroad.

I sincerely thank the authors, the University of Malta, and Euroguidance Malta as publishers of this study and augur analytical discussion that will lead to implementation of services that are more effective and aid individuals to engage in better decision making processes that lead to options that improve the quality of life.

**DR. LOUIS GALEA**
**MINISTER OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Malta is the highest and most prestigious education institution in Malta. It dates back several centuries and has throughout the years contributed substantially to the country's human and professional development. The University of Malta currently employs 846 lecturers (of whom 532 are full-timers), together with 586 administrative and technical personnel. Its student population is increasing every year and has reached 8,316 in the academic year 2004/2005. This figure includes 567 foreign students from various countries. Students can today choose from a list of over about 90 courses at levels varying from certificates and diplomas, to bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees.

The University undoubtedly gives a significant contribution to Maltese culture, especially through several humanistic courses. However, it also has an important responsibility for preparing students for high-level employment. Most Maltese professionals and many administrators and managers have been trained at the University of Malta. This explains why the University is often at the centre of controversy and debate on whether it is giving the right preparation to students who will eventually lead Malta at the various levels and sectors of the economy and society. The University is frequently accused of having insufficient links and dialogue with the world of work, and consequently, of running courses which are not necessarily in-step with Malta's contemporary labour market needs.

As a response to this and other concerns, some studies have been devised to obtain valuable feedback by graduates, managers and employers on the career situation and career prospects of University graduates. One of the earliest graduates' tracer research studies was carried out by Baldacchino (1997) among 237 graduates who were conferred with their academic awards between 1986 and 1992. The study sought to examine "the relationship between qualification and occupation, education and economy among the country's stock of graduate workers" (Baldacchino, 1997, p.19). Subsequently, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) (1999) published a tracer study of graduates' employment situation. The study focused on the position in the labour market and the unemployment rate of those who graduated in November 1999 from the University of Malta. In 2002, the Graduate Potential Group based at the University carried out a survey among main Maltese employers who were asked to forecast their needs for graduates in the following years.

These studies and other similar studies, while contributing to increase knowledge about graduate employment, were very sporadic in nature. The Students Advisory Services (SAS) still felt the need of more comprehensive and up-to-date information about the outcomes graduates in order to be used as part of its career

guidance work. Thus, in 2001, Debono, Delicata & Caruana carried out a study of the outcome of graduates in the job market. The study was very comprehensive as it was distributed to all year 2000 graduates and dealt with a considerable variety of career–related issues.

The study was repeated two years later by Debono, Debono & Caruana (2003) among University graduates of 2002. The authors obtained the assistance of Professor Godfrey Baldacchino from the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) whose insights on both method and content increased the professional quality of the study.

This is the third biennial study that the authors are carrying out amongst University graduates. The study includes a preface by the Rector of the University of Malta, Professor Roger Ellul-Micallef, a foreword by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, Dr. Louis Galea, and reviews by several social partners and experts in related fields, namely Dr. Romina Bartolo (UHM), Ms. Doreen Coleiro (GWU), the Human Resource and Social Policy Working Group (FOI), Dr. Janet Mifsud (NCPE), Mr. Saviour Rizzo (CLS), and Professor Edward Zammit (CLS/ ETC).

This study aims to gather a wide-range of career-related information about University graduates. Such information is primarily intended to serve as a tool for career guidance officers within and outside educational institutions, since these often lack scientific data about tertiary-education outcomes in Malta. The study can be useful for students reading for guidance related qualifications. It will also give University authorities objective and reliable feedback about the early career outcomes of University graduates. Such feedback can motivate and guide University Faculties and Institutes to enhance the relevance of their courses.

The study is divided into four sections. The research objectives and design follow this introduction. Subsequently, the main findings of the study are described and discussed. In order to facilitate understanding, the findings are divided into five main subsections. The main graduates' career-related outcomes are first examined from a general perspective. Subsequently, these outcomes are considered according to gender, classification, age bracket, and faculties/ institutes. Finally, a brief synthesis of the discussion is presented.

The authors wish to thank all those who collaborated in this research, especially Mr. Charles Tabone for his various contributions throughout the stages of the research process. A special thanks also goes to Mr. Saviour Rizzo and Professor Godfrey Baldacchino for revising the final draft of the document. The authors also wish to thank Ms. Charmaine Pace for helping with the inputting of data.

# 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

## 2.1 Research Objectives

The research project's main objective is to examine the career outcomes of the University graduates 2004 (persons who graduated from the University of Malta at the November 2004 graduation ceremony). In detail, the study aims to:

1. Investigate the graduates' pre-graduation profile by examining their parents' education and occupation, the graduates' age, sex, qualification, classification, and any previous work experience.
2. Assess the career outcomes of graduates nine months after completing their last University exams.
3. Analyse the graduates' job-related attitudes.
4. Examine the specific relationships that may exist between graduates' career outcomes and sex, age, classification and faculty or institute.

## 2.2 Participants

This study was conducted amongst all graduates of the University of Malta who were conferred with their academic awards during the graduation ceremonies held in November 2004. Survey packages were sent by post to all 2,602 Maltese graduates. Foreign graduates were not contacted as most of them would have returned to their countries and would have been untraceable.

A total of 1,170 graduates (45%) answered the survey. While 35% of the respondents were males, 65% were females. A third of the respondents were aged between 23 and 25 years, while another third were between 20 and 22 years old. Nearly 10% of the respondents were 41 years or older. These results reflect the recent trends at the University which is registering an increasing number of females and older students.

**Table 1. Gender and age bracket**

| | Males | | Females | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| 20-22 years | 104 | 25.9 | 272 | 35.6 | 376 | 32.3 |
| 23-25 years | 135 | 33.7 | 242 | 31.7 | 377 | 32.4 |
| 26-30 years | 67 | 16.7 | 109 | 14.3 | 176 | 15.1 |
| 31-40 years | 58 | 14.5 | 66 | 8.7 | 124 | 10.7 |
| 41 years + | 37 | 9.2 | 74 | 9.7 | 111 | 9.5 |
| Total | 401 | 100 | 763 | 100 | 1164 | 100 |
| Missing | | | | | 6 | |
| **Total Respondents** | | | | | **1170** | |

Graduates from 21 faculties and institutes participated in the study. As expected, most respondents graduated from *Education*, *FEMA*, *Laws, IHC,* and *Arts*. The number of replies from each faculty and institute generally correspond to their number of graduates. Only the 11 faculties and institutes with the largest numbers of respondents (over 15 persons per group) will be examined in Section 3.5 (Responses by Faculties and Institutes).

**Table 2. Faculties and institutes in descending order of respondents**

| | | Count | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Faculty of Education | 310 | 27.0 |
| 2. | Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy | 298 | 26.0 |
| 3. | Faculty of Laws | 112 | 9.8 |
| 4. | Institute of Health Care | 95 | 8.3 |
| 5. | Faculty of Arts | 81 | 7.1 |
| 6. | Centre for Communication Technology | 45 | 3.9 |
| 7. | Faculty of Medicine and Surgery | 37 | 3.2 |
| 8. | Centre for Labour Studies | 35 | 3.0 |
| 9. | Faculty of Science | 28 | 2.4 |
| 10. | Faculty of Engineering | 27 | 2.4 |
| 11. | Board of Studies for IT | 17 | 1.5 |
| 12. | Faculty of Architecture | 13 | 1.1 |
| 13. | European Documentation and Research Centre | 11 | 1.0 |
| 14. | Institute of Public Administration and Management | 9 | 0.8 |
| 15. | International Institute for Baroque Studies | 8 | 0.7 |
| 16. | Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies | 7 | 0.6 |
| 17. | Faculty of Dental Surgery | 4 | 0.3 |
| 18. | Faculty of Theology | 4 | 0.3 |
| 19. | Institute of Forensic Studies | 4 | 0.3 |
| 20. | Institute for Conservation and Restoration Studies | 2 | 0.2 |
| 21. | European Centre for Gerontology and Geriatrics | 1 | 0.1 |
| | Total | 1148 | 100 |
| | Missing | 22 | |
| | **Total number of respondents** | **1170** | |

The majority of respondents (54%) graduated with a first degree. Diploma courses are also very popular (26%). While a considerable percentage graduated with a master degree (11%), only one PhD graduate answered the survey. This reflects the very low number of students following PhD courses at the University of Malta. The University is not equipped with the proper infrastructure to cater for PhD studies. Apart from an inadequate library and very limited research facilities, academic members of staff are not given incentives to supervise PhD students. Besides, many Maltese students prefer to read for a PhD abroad for prestige reasons.

**Table 3. Type of award**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| PhD | 1 | 0.1 |
| Master | 123 | 10.6 |
| LLD | 26 | 2.2 |
| Postgraduate/ Postqualification Certificate/ Diploma | 88 | 7.6 |
| First degree (Bachelor/ Bachelor Honours/ MD) | 624 | 53.6 |
| Diploma* | 303 | 26.0 |
| Total | 1165 | 100 |
| Missing | 5 | |
| **Total number of respondents** | **1170** | |

*including some certificate courses

Out of first degree holders, a large majority of respondents got a Second Class/ Category II classification (83%). While 8% were awarded their degree with a Third Class/ Category III. One must point out that higher classified graduates might have a greater tendency to respond to surveys than lower classified ones.

**Table 4. Classification of first degree holders**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| First Class/ Category I | 50 | 8.6 |
| Second Class Upper/ Category IIA | 250 | 42.9 |
| Second Class Lower/ Category IIB | 151 | 25.9 |
| Unspecified Second Class/Category II | 85 | 14.6 |
| Third Class/ Category III | 47 | 8.1 |
| Total | 583 | 100 |
| Missing | 41 | |
| **Total number of first degree holders** | **624** | |

## 2.3 Research Instrument

The self-report instrument used in this study was a questionnaire consisting of 35 items divided into six sections. The first section requested demographic and educational information. The second section dealt with the current career status of the sample, that is, whether the participant was employed and/or pursuing further study/ training/ research. The third and largest section sought to gather further data on job-related aspects. Section four explored prospective job expectations of participants who were seeking employment. Section five dealt with study, education, or research that graduates might be pursuing. Section six examined why unemployed graduates who were not pursuing further education were not seeking employment.

## 2.4 Procedure

A survey package consisting of a covering letter, a three-page questionnaire, and a self-addressed envelope was prepared. The survey package was piloted on a small sample of University graduates who were asked to comment on the clarity of the instructions, the wording of the items, and the layout of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then revised, taking into consideration the remarks of the pilot sample. Subsequently, it was circulated among all Maltese graduates who were conferred with their academic awards in November 2004.

The covering letter included details about the rationale of the survey. The letter emphasised that strict confidentiality will be respected. The graduates were instructed to post the questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope provided without affixing any stamps. Finally, the participants were given the Students Advisory Services' contacts should they require any further details. A web-page was also specified for those interested in the results of the research.

The survey package was sent out by post on 9 March 2005. A reminder letter was sent on the 21 March in order to enhance the response rate. Graduates were invited to send back the filled-in questionnaire by 31 March 2005.

### 2.4.1 Data Analysis

Data was analysed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 11.5.1). The statistical analysis was conducted in two stages. First, frequencies were derived for all variables. Then, variables of interest were analysed with the help of Cross-Tabulations, Chi-Square and ANOVA.

In order to keep the study as simple as possible, Anova results will not be printed. Whenever, relations or differences are pointed out among the examined variables, they are statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence.

# 3. ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

The analysis of responses will be divided into five sections. Section One will deliver the General Results. Sections Two to Five will present results from the perspective of Gender, Age Bracket, Classification, and Faculties/ Institutes respectively.

The five sections are structured in a similar way. Comments about each individual finding consist of a description of the results and some insights about them. These are followed by a Table of results, and occasionally, a graph. Each section ends with an overall analysis of its main findings.

## 3.1 General Results

### 3.1.1 Parents' Education and Occupation

Most University graduates have parents with secondary level of education (43% of fathers and 51% of mothers). However, there are more mothers than fathers with primary and secondary levels of education and more fathers with post-secondary and tertiary levels of education. Until some decades ago, very few Maltese persons used to further their studies beyond secondary education and most of those who continued studying, especially at University level, used to be males.

**Table 5. Parents' education**

| | Father | | Mother | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| None | 23 | 2.0 | 16 | 1.4 |
| Primary | 238 | 20.6 | 268 | 23.1 |
| Secondary | 496 | 42.8 | 588 | 50.7 |
| Post-secondary | 214 | 18.5 | 159 | 13.7 |
| Tertiary | 187 | 16.1 | 129 | 11.1 |
| **Total** | **1158** | **100** | **1160** | **100** |

This study examined the parents' occupations when graduates were 16 years old. This particular age was chosen because, as research shows, it is a critical age during which students tend to make important career choices. The fathers of most graduates at age 16 were employed in white-collar jobs. The most common types of fathers' occupations were in fact administrative/ managerial and professional/ technical (20% and 18% respectively). The fathers of the third largest group of

graduates held skilled/ semiskilled occupations. Fewer graduates' fathers worked in executive/ clerical, unskilled jobs, or were employers/ self-employed.

In line with the Maltese traditional division of labour in which the husband is the expected bread-winner and the wife is the home maker (Abela, 2001), most mothers of graduates at age 16 were not in paid employment (70%). Out of the employed mothers, most worked in professional/ technical or executive/ clerical occupations (12% and 7% respectively).

**Table 6. Parents' occupation when respondents were 16 years old**

| | Father | | Mother | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | % | **Count** | % |
| Employer/own account worker | 138 | 12.8 | 25 | 2.3 |
| Professional/technical | 195 | 18.1 | 128 | 11.8 |
| Administrative/managerial | 211 | 19.6 | 25 | 2.3 |
| Executive/clerical | 162 | 15.0 | 77 | 7.1 |
| Skilled/semiskilled | 187 | 17.3 | 15 | 1.4 |
| Unskilled | 128 | 11.9 | 42 | 3.9 |
| Unemployed | 4 | 0.4 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Housewife/househusband | 0 | 0 | 763 | 70.2 |
| Deceased | 18 | 1.7 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Pensioner | 28 | 2.6 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Student | 8 | 0.7 | 6 | 0.6 |
| **Total** | **1079** | **100** | **1087** | **100** |

## 3.1.2 Employment Outcomes

Most graduates (83%) are currently employed. The majority of the employed graduates (75% of all graduates) hold full-time employment, while 8% are employed on a part-time basis. A large proportion of those who are in part-time employment or unemployed are studying on a full-time basis. The unemployment situation of Maltese graduates will be tackled in Section 3.1.6.

**Table 7. Current employment**

| | **Count** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 968 | 82.9 |
| *Of whom in Part-time employment* | *92* | *7.9* |
| *Full-time employment* | *876* | *75.0* |
| No | 199 | 17.1 |
| **Total** | **1167** | **100** |

18% of all new University graduates, four percent less than the previous study, perform voluntary work. This figure is considerably lower than the national average that ranges between 27% and 32% (Abela, 2001). Data from Abela's (2001) research shows that older persons tend to be more involved in voluntary work than younger ones. Interestingly, the rate of new University graduates performing voluntary work is closer to the European average of people between 18 and 34 years old (which is about 22%). Relatively low participation in voluntary work might be negatively influenced by the difficulties encountered during the first year after graduation. Most graduates would be struggling with their new job and trying to find a new balance in their private life, thus having little time to participate in voluntary work. The level of participation probably increases in time, as Abela (2001) found that 43% of all tertiary educated people perform voluntary work. Tertiary education might limit social participation in the short-term, and increase it in the long-term.

**Table 8. Performing voluntary work**

| | **Count** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 206 | 17.8 |
| No | 950 | 82.2 |
| **Total** | **1156** | **100** |

60% of the employed graduates needed the University qualification to apply for their current job while 40% of the employed graduates did not require it.

This statistic might be an indication that the graduate job market is becoming more saturated and a considerable percentage of graduates are underemployed, at least in the first part of their career. This figure shows a downward trend in the percentage of graduates employed in jobs requiring a University qualification. Debono et al. (2001) found that out of all full-time employed year 2000 graduates, 10% claimed to perform unrelated work, while a subsequent study revealed that 33% of those graduating in 2002 did not require their University course to apply for the job (Debono et al., 2003). Future research could enquire whether having graduate employees performing work intended for non-graduates leads to work of better or worse quality.

**Table 9. University course requirement to apply for job**

| | **Count** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 574 | 60 |
| No | 383 | 40 |
| **Total** | **957** | **100** |

The majority of the employed year 2004 graduates work in the public sector (54%). The private sector had absorbed 46% of these graduates within 9 months after they had completed their course. This figure does not tally with NSO statistics (May 2005) which show that around 66% of all Maltese employees work in the private sector and only 34% work in the public sector. The likely explanation for this apparent discrepancy is that while most new graduates are initially employed in the public sector, a large proportion probably moves to the private sector after getting some experience. Baldacchino (1997) found that 20% of graduates whose first job was in the public sector joined the private sector when the right opportunities turned up.

Most of the respondents (84%) work on indefinite contracts. Unlike the general perception, public and private sectors generate a fairly similar level of definite contracts. It would be interesting to verify across the years whether the ratio of definite contracts is increasing as is happening in many developed countries.

**Table 10. Sector of employment and termination date**

| | **Count** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| Public | 506 | 54 |
| *of whom on a definite contract* | *85* | *9.1* |
| *an indefinite contract* | *421* | *44.9* |
| Private* | 431 | 46 |
| *of whom on a definite contract* | *65* | *6.9* |
| *an indefinite contract* | *366* | *39.1* |
| **Total** | **937** | **100** |

**Includes self-employment*

The employment sector which tends to absorb most of the new University graduates is Education, where more than a third (37%) of all graduates are employed. Two other sectors that absorb a large number of graduates are health and banking/ finance/ audit (14% and 12% respectively). The largest two faculties at University are in fact those of *Education* and *FEMA*, and the largest institute is *IHC*. The sectors which recruit the smallest percentage of new graduates are Retail/wholesale, Environment/ construction, and Hotels/catering/entertainment/ tourism with around 3% of graduates in each sector.

**Table 11. Field of employment**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Education | 352 | 36.8 |
| Social | 41 | 4.3 |
| Health | 132 | 13.8 |
| Manufacturing | 54 | 5.6 |
| Banking/finance/audit | 119 | 12.4 |
| IT | 38 | 4.0 |
| Hotels/catering/entertainment/ tourism | 29 | 3.0 |
| Consultancy | 43 | 4.5 |
| Transport/communication | 44 | 4.6 |
| Retail/wholesale | 28 | 2.9 |
| Environment/ construction | 25 | 2.6 |
| Other | 51 | 5.3 |
| **Total** | **956** | **100** |

Half of the working graduates are employed in professional/ technical jobs. Over a third work in executive/ clerical posts, and 13% work in administrative/ managerial jobs. Very few graduates are employers, own account workers, or work in skilled/ semiskilled or unskilled jobs. As most University courses provide the academic basis of professionals, it stands to reason that most graduates are employed in professional/ technical posts. This distribution differs significantly from figures in Debono et al. (2003), as there are fewer graduates working in professional/ technical (50% compared to 62%), and administrative/ managerial posts (13% compared to 17%). On the other hand, many more new graduates are working in executive/clerical posts (34% compared to 15%). This indicates a shift in the early occupations of graduates. As overall, professional and managerial work is not diminishing, the supply of such graduates is outstripping the demand.

**Table 12. Type of occupation**

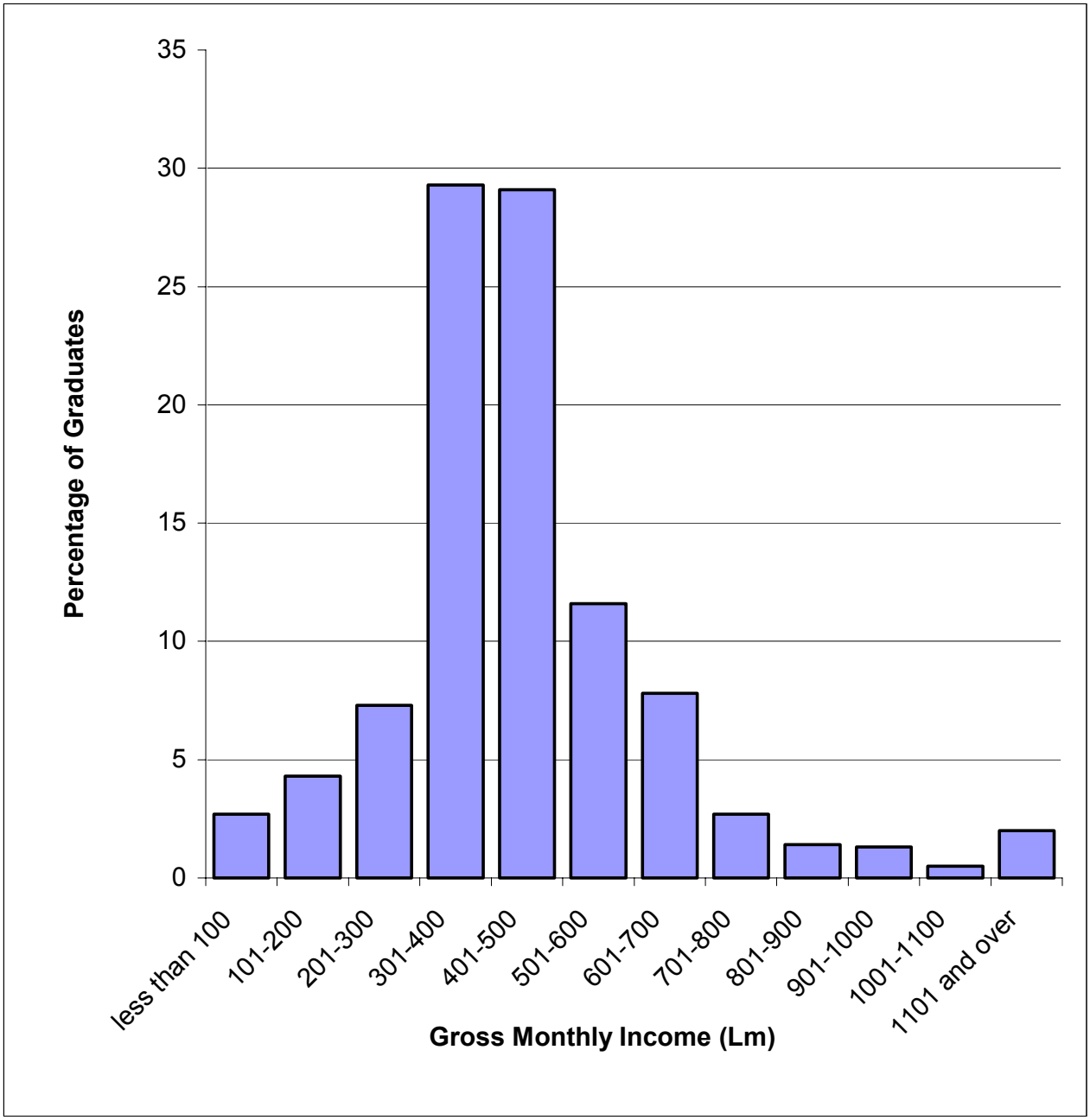
| | 2004 | | 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| Employer | 5 | 0.5 | 24 | 3.3 |
| Own account worker | 8 | 0.8 | | |
| Professional/technical | 478 | 49.5 | 457 | 62.4 |
| Administrative/managerial | 121 | 12.5 | 125 | 17.1 |
| Executive/clerical | 325 | 33.6 | 108 | 14.8 |
| Skilled/semiskilled | 4 | 0.4 | 12 | 1.6 |
| Unskilled | 25 | 2.6 | 6 | 0.8 |
| **Total** | **966** | **100** | **732** | **100** |

Graduates in the first year after graduation tend to earn a similar wage to the national average gross annual salary of Lm 5,174 (NSO statistics, May 2005). 58% of all employed graduates claim to earn between Lm301-500 per month, while 12% earn between Lm501-600. The few graduates earn Lm300 or less per month tend to be part-time workers. The earnings at the first year of their professional career, though not relatively high, can be rated to be satisfactory given that professional careers are underlined by yearly increments and high promotion prospects.

**Table 13. Current gross monthly income**

| | **All Employed Graduates** | | **Full-time Employed Graduates** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| less than 100 | 26 | 2.7 | 3 | 0.3 |
| 101-200 | 41 | 4.3 | 6 | 0.7 |
| 201-300 | 69 | 7.3 | 49 | 5.7 |
| 301-400 | 279 | 29.3 | 274 | 31.7 |
| 401-500 | 277 | 29.1 | 276 | 31.9 |
| 501-600 | 110 | 11.6 | 110 | 12.7 |
| 601-700 | 74 | 7.8 | 72 | 8.3 |
| 701-800 | 26 | 2.7 | 26 | 3.0 |
| 801-900 | 13 | 1.4 | 13 | 1.5 |
| 901-1000 | 12 | 1.3 | 12 | 1.4 |
| 1001-1100 | 5 | 0.5 | 5 | 0.6 |
| 1101 and over | 19 | 2.0 | 18 | 2.1 |
| **Total** | **951** | **100** | **864** | **100** |

**Figure 1. Current gross monthly income**




Most new employed graduates (29%) found out about their current job through adverts on newspapers. The second most popular method was through government's education and health divisions (21%). These two divisions have in the past years employed the largest numbers of graduates. Besides, graduates with several degrees and diplomas are recruited through a contract with the health division signed at the beginning of their University course.

Relatives and friends are another important method used by graduates to find work. As the Maltese society is still predominantly community- and network-based, it is nor surprising that personal and family connections are the third most common way to find out about a job.

With nearly 22% of the Maltese population having access to the Internet, (NSO, 2005) it comes quite surprising that less than 1% of all new graduates found out about their job through this medium. Since comprehensive websites regarding job opportunities exist, their little use can be attributed to other factors such as insufficient publicity of websites and lack of awareness about the utility of internet for job search.

Malta's public employment organisation, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and the various private, licensed, employment agencies were used by 4% of the new employed graduates. ETC focuses its resources on unemployed persons with a lower educational level, hence largely failing to cater for graduates' needs and aspirations. However, with an increasing number of underemployed and unemployed graduates, ETC should take more into consideration this important section of the workforce.

**Table 14. Type of job search**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Advert on newspaper | 256 | 28.5 |
| Relatives/friends | 142 | 15.8 |
| Employment agency | 39 | 4.3 |
| Information available at University | 45 | 5.0 |
| Education/health department | 188 | 21.0 |
| Internal call/promotion | 43 | 4.8 |
| Approached by employer | 107 | 11.9 |
| Sent CV/ application | 33 | 3.7 |
| Internet | 6 | 0.7 |
| Other | 38 | 4.2 |
| **Total** | **897** | **100** |

### 3.1.3 Job-related Attitudes

Graduates' work related attitudes are mostly positive. The majority of employed graduates (88%) state that they have the necessary skills to perform their job. They tend to be satisfied with their job (72%) and do not consider quitting their job (69%). They also perceive their job as being challenging (73%).

Most graduates have satisfactory relationships with their colleagues (84%) and feel respected by their superiors (69%). The majority can easily balance their work and private life (57%) and about half of them (52%) can develop their career with their present employer.

Stress and dissatisfaction with salary are the most common work-related problems. In fact, only a third of the respondents are not unduly stressed in their job and only a fourth are satisfied with their salary. These findings might indicate high job expectations of graduates.

**Table 15. Job-related attitudes (%)**

| | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|---|---|---|---|
| Skilled enough for job | 4.0 | 8.6 | 87.5 |
| Satisfied with job | 11.4 | 16.8 | 71.8 |
| Unduly stressed in job | 34.3 | 36.0 | 29.7 |
| Can develop career with present employer | 24.3 | 23.8 | 52.0 |
| Satisfied with salary | 51.7 | 25.1 | 23.3 |
| Perceive job as challenging | 12.0 | 15.5 | 72.5 |
| Satisfied with colleagues relationships | 4.8 | 10.9 | 84.3 |
| Satisfied with respect superiors show | 13.4 | 17.8 | 68.8 |
| Considering quitting job | 68.8 | 18.3 | 13.0 |
| Easily balance work/private life | 17.6 | 25.4 | 56.9 |

## 3.1.4 Employment History

Two-thirds of the University graduates were employed before graduating. This figure is high because it includes graduates who followed part-time courses and those who followed a University course as 'mature students'.

**Table 16. Employed before graduating**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 625 | 65.3 |
| No | 332 | 34.7 |
| **Total** | **957** | **100** |

Most graduates do not change their employer in the short-term in the first year after getting their University qualification. 76% of those who were employed before graduating continued working for the same employer after getting their University qualification. This can be attributed to lack of easily available better opportunities, and, though probably to a lesser extent, to pending contracts with employers.

**Table 17. Worked for current employer before graduating**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 470 | 76.4 |
| No | 145 | 23.6 |
| **Total** | **615** | **100** |

On the other hand, 31% of those who worked before graduating changed their job with the same or another employer after getting their University qualification. This means that around 10% of graduates who have changed their job, remained working for the same employer after graduating. Thus, a University qualification might increase the prospects for occupational mobility within the same organisation.

**Table 18. Changed job after graduation**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 174 | 30.6 |
| No | 395 | 69.4 |
| **Total** | **569** | **100** |

59% of those who changed their employment believe to have improved their career. On the other hand, 41% state that the change in employment has not resulted in net career benefits. A change in employment takes time to generate benefits that are felt directly by the employee, while any negative aspects might be felt earlier, and could be seen as more direct.

**Table 19. Change in employment improved career**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 194 | 58.8 |
| No | 136 | 41.2 |
| **Total** | **330** | **100** |

## 3.1.5 Post-Graduate Study

35% of all graduates are pursuing further study. The group is equally divided between those studying part-time and full-time. In the past decades, the number of University students including post-graduates has increased steadily. However, there was a decrease in the percentage of graduates pursuing further studies during the period 2000-2004. Results from Debono et.al. (2001) and Debono et.al. (2003) indicate that in previous years, graduates were more likely to engage in further studies (46% in the year 2000, and 45% in the year 2002).

**Table 20. Currently pursuing further study**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 405 | 34.9 |
| No | 756 | 65.1 |
| **Total** | **1161** | **100** |

While in 1997, graduates tended to enrol more in short courses (Baldacchino, 1997), the preference has now changed to higher level courses. In fact, most graduates who are pursuing further study are reading for a masters program (34%). A considerable percentage of graduates (21%) are enrolled in a course leading to a diploma or certificate. Another large group of graduates are pursuing an *LL.D* course (17%). 12% of graduates are reading for a bachelor degree, while 11% are following a professional training course.

**Table 21. Description of further study**

| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Doctoral | 6 | 1.6 |
| Masters | 126 | 34.4 |
| LLD | 61 | 16.7 |
| Bachelor degree | 45 | 12.3 |
| Diploma or certificate | 77 | 21.0 |
| Professional training course | 40 | 10.9 |
| Other | 11 | 3.0 |
| **Total** | **366** | **100** |

### 3.1.6 Current Job Search

About a fourth of all graduates are actively seeking employment, or alternative employment. Most of these graduates are already in employment but wish to find another job. Job-mobility is known to be very high among new graduates, but tends to diminish after the first year of work.

Nearly half of the active job seekers (48%) are already in full-time employment. 18% of job seekers are enrolled in full-time study and are not in full-time employment. Out of those seeking employment, 22% are enrolled in part-time study and/ or working on a part-time basis. 12% of all job seekers are unemployed and not studying.

Around 8% of the whole population of graduates do not have a full-time job or are not in full-time studies and are searching for a job. These results indicate that the level of graduate unemployment is on the increase. In fact, the two previous studies carried out by the same authors show about 4% of unemployed year 2000 graduates and 6% unemployed year 2002 graduates.

**Table 22. Active job seekers**

| | Count | % of active | % of total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employed full-time | 132 | 48.0 | 11.3 |
| Enrolled in full-time study (but unemployed | 48 | 17.5 | 4.1 |
| Enrolled in part-time study and/or working part- | 60 | 21.8 | 5.1 |
| Unemployed and not studying | 34 | 12.4 | 2.9 |
| Missing | 1 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| Active job seekers | 275 | 100 | 23.5 |
| **Total respondents** | **1170** | | |

Out of those searching for a job, 89% expect the job to be related to their University studies. This figure is very similar to that reported by Debono et al. (2001), and Debono et al. (2003). One must note that a substantial 8.5% would be satisfied with any job. It would be interesting to examine the reasons for such a response.

**Table 23. Prospective job expectation**

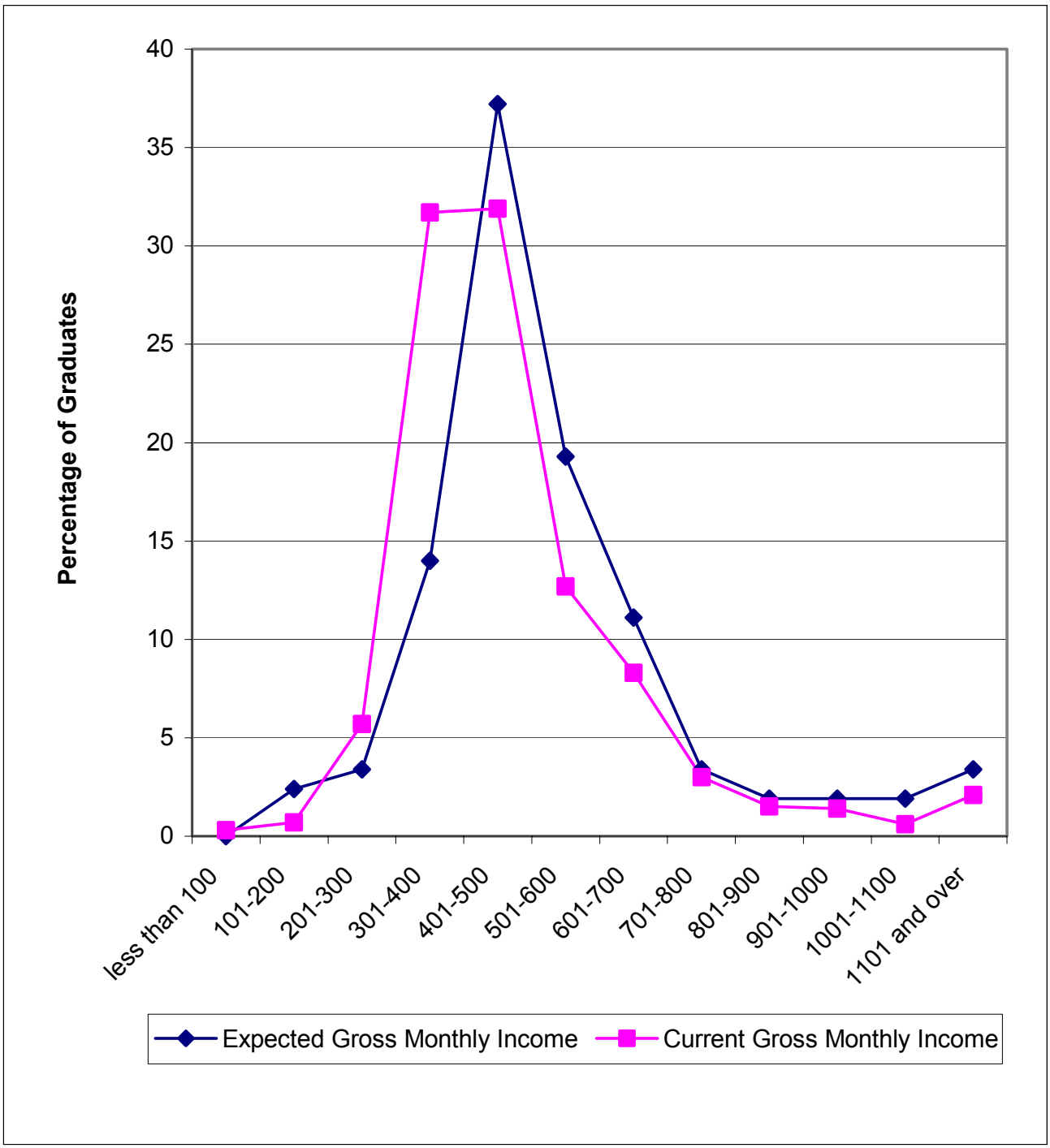
| | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Related to studies | 188 | 89.1 |
| Not related to studies | 5 | 2.4 |
| Any | 18 | 8.5 |
| **Total** | **180** | **100** |

Most of those searching for a job expect their new job's monthly salary to be between Lm300-600. This is in the same range earned by most graduates currently employed on a full-time basis. However, as can be seen in the Table and Figure below, a considerable percentage of graduates expect higher salaries than what full-time graduates currently earn. High expectations can motivate graduates to achieve higher earnings. On the other hand, if the expectations are unrealistic, graduates will be inevitably unsatisfied with existing job opportunities, and will run a greater risk of remaining unemployed for a longer period of time. This is in line with the Expectancy Theory which states that vocational choice is dependent on what one values or wants from a job (including money) and the expectation that getting a particular job will actually satisfy that value (Furnham, 1997).

**Table 24. Expected gross monthly income (Lm)**

| | **Count** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| -100 | 0 | 0 |
| 101-200 | 5 | 2.4 |
| 201-300 | 7 | 3.4 |
| 301-400 | 29 | 14.0 |
| 401-500 | 77 | 37.2 |
| 501-600 | 40 | 19.3 |
| 601-700 | 23 | 11.1 |
| 701-800 | 7 | 3.4 |
| 801-900 | 4 | 1.9 |
| 901-1000 | 4 | 1.9 |
| 1001-1100 | 4 | 1.9 |
| 1101+ | 7 | 3.4 |
| **Total** | **207** | **100** |

**Figure 2. Current gross monthly income vs expected gross monthly income (Lm)**



### 3.1.7 Discussion of Main Findings

A large proportion of University graduates come from a middle or upper class family background. However, they are usually more academically qualified than their parents. In line with Tabone (1987), short-range upward social mobility seems to be occurring through education. After less than a year of having been conferred with their academic award, most graduates are in full-time employment in professional/ technical posts and earning a similar wage to the Maltese national average wage. Most of them are employed on an indefinite contract, with a slight tendency to be employed in the public sector. Graduates tend to have positive attitudes towards their working life. Most of them were employed before graduating and a third are furthering their studies, many of whom at Master's level. Positive career prospects are linked to family background. As expected, graduates tend to find jobs with relatively high incomes and good working conditions.

When compared to the previous study, the new data indicates that the entry point of graduates' occupational level is shifting downwards. Graduates seem to be experiencing greater difficulties in finding jobs at professional/ technical and administrative/ managerial levels. Indeed, a greater number of graduates have to work in executive/clerical posts, at least in the initial phases of their career. Underemployment may be a result of the oversupply of University graduates. There tends to be high job mobility among young graduates. Tracing the career path of the graduates within a span of five years could add support to this proposal.

The past years have seen a rise in graduate unemployment. There has been an increase of about 1% unemployed new graduates every year between 2000 and 2004. The January-March 2005 Labour Force Survey shows that the overall Maltese unemployment rate (the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force) stood at 6.7%, which is considerably lower than the graduate unemployment rate of 8%. However, the graduate unemployment rate is lower than the general unemployment rate of young persons.

**Table 25. Graduates' unemployment and further studies 2000-2004 (%)**

| | Graduates 2004 | Graduates 2002 | Graduates 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Graduate unemployment rate | 8.0 | 5.9 | 3.7 |
| Graduates pursuing further | 34.9 | 45.3 | 46.4 |

The increase in graduate unemployment can be primarily attributed to a fall in demand from the public sector which used to be the main source of the employment of new graduates. The government's policy of curtailing employment in the public sector to be in line with the Maastricht Criteria is having an adverse effect on the recruitment of graduates. The private sector does not seem to have

generated enough demand to recruit the incurring number of graduates seeking employment.

This rise in unemployment rate might also in part be due to a mismatch between education and the world of work. Employers and graduates often accuse University of focusing too much on academic knowledge while giving less importance to practical skills and the application of theories. In fact, relatively few University courses include a substantial amount of work observation and practice within their syllabus.

Another reason for an increasing level of graduate unemployment might derive from the fact that many graduates might only apply for vacancies for professional posts as they might not want to start their working life at a clerical level. One must here point out that a University qualification would increase the probability that these employees climb up the organisational hierarchy faster than other colleagues with a lower education.

Another related aspect that is worth considering is that graduates tend to refrain from using employment agencies to find employment. The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), Malta's largest employment agency, has traditionally focused on the employment demands of lower level occupations, ignoring (by default rather than by active design) the needs of tertiary educated people. This situation needs to be remedied before the state of unemployed and underemployed graduates worsens.

Graduate unemployment might also be attributable to a decreasing percentage of graduates who choose to pursue further studies. One would expect that as the level of unemployment increases, the number of graduates continuing their studies would also increase in order to enhance their employability. However, this study shows that over a period of two years, the ratio of graduates pursuing further studies immediately after getting their University qualification decreased by 10%. This decline might be due to several reasons, including an increasing cost of living which makes it more difficult for graduates to cope with the exigencies of life.

## 3.2 Responses by Gender

### 3.2.1 University Course Followed by Gender

Females strongly outnumber males in all age brackets apart from the 31-40 year olds, where their numbers converge. Whereas 14.5% (58) of all Males are in the 31-40 years age bracket, only 8.7% (66) of females are within the same age bracket. While the largest percentage of males are 23-25 years old, the largest number of females are 20-22 years old, indicating that females tend to enrol at University at a younger age than males.

When these results are compared with those of the year 2002 graduates, a drop in the number of males within the 20-25 years age bracket is noticed. On the other hand, there was a rise in the amount and percentage of males over 30 years and females over 41 graduating from University. There was also a substantial increase in older women aged 41 years or over who graduate from University. Older persons, especially females, are getting more University qualifications, showing that Lifelong Learning in Malta is gaining importance.

**Table 26. Age bracket by gender**

| | Graduates 2004 | | | | Graduates 2002 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| 20-22 years | 104 | 25.9 | 272 | 35.6 | 267 | 70.6 | 432 | 76.0 |
| 23-25 years | 135 | 33.7 | 242 | 31.7 | | | | |
| 26-30 years | 67 | 16.7 | 109 | 14.3 | 55 | 14.1 | 46 | 10.8 |
| 31-40 years | 58 | 14.5 | 66 | 8.7 | 36 | 9.2 | 41 | 8.3 |
| 41 years + | 37 | 9.2 | 74 | 9.7 | 24 | 6.1 | 21 | 4.8 |
| **Total** | **401** | **100** | **763** | **100** | **391** | **100** | **540** | **100** |

In spite of a higher participation rate of females in University, the ratios of males and females graduating from specific faculties and institutes reveal that the traditional gendered division of professions still persists. A considerably higher percentage of females graduated from *Education* (34% vs 13%), and to a lesser extent from *Arts* (8% vs 5%) and *IHC* (9% vs 7%). On the other hand, a higher ratio of male graduates followed courses at *Engineering* (6% vs 1%), *IT* (3% vs 1%), *Science* (4% vs 2%) and *FEMA* (32% vs 22%). However, there seems to be a tendency in University faculties and institutes towards more equal gender representation. For example, the traditionally male-dominated faculties of *Laws* and *Medicine & Surgery* have in time become balanced.

Certain professions are still seen as 'male' or 'female' domains and persons of the other sex are culturally discouraged from pursuing them. Other professions, most notably teaching, are dominated by females for their working conditions. This profession attracts females because it can enable them to reconcile their working life with family obligations. The traditional caring role of females in the Maltese society is still reflected in their predominance in the helping/ caring professions.

**Table 27. Graduates from faculties/ institutes by gender**

| | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Arts | 20 | 5.0 | 61 | 8.0 |
| FEMA | 128 | 31.9 | 170 | 22.2 |
| Education | 50 | 12.5 | 259 | 33.8 |
| Engineering | 22 | 5.5 | 5 | 0.7 |
| Laws | 39 | 9.7 | 73 | 9.5 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 12 | 3.0 | 24 | 3.1 |
| Science | 15 | 3.7 | 13 | 1.7 |
| IT | 13 | 3.2 | 4 | 0.5 |
| CCT | 15 | 3.7 | 29 | 3.8 |
| IHC | 27 | 6.7 | 68 | 8.9 |
| CLS | 15 | 3.7 | 20 | 2.6 |
| Others | 45 | 11.2 | 40 | 5.2 |
| **Total** | **401** | **100** | **766** | **100** |

## 3.2.2 Employment Outcomes by Gender

There is no significant difference in the overall proportion of employed males and females. However, there is a slightly higher percentage of females in employment when compared to their male peers (84% and 82% respectively). The prevalent assumption that men tend to find it easier to enter the labour market is not confirmed by the data of this study. However, one should note that such result is influenced by the higher proportion of men who further their studies on a full-time basis.

**Table 28. Current employment by gender**

| | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Yes | 328 | 81.8 | 637 | 83.5 |
| No | 73 | 18.2 | 126 | 16.5 |
| **Total** | **401** | **100** | **763** | **100** |

The majority of the unemployed graduates who are neither in full-time study nor in full-time employment are females (64%). This reflects the greater number of female graduates in 2004.

A much larger percentage of male graduates perform voluntary work when compared to their female peers (26% and 14% respectively). This trend follows the one presented by the previous study. However one notes a five percentage point drop in the amount of females while the amount of males remained stable. The voluntary work sector in Malta might be offering more openings for male oriented work while the traditionally female oriented voluntary work is now being challenged by new professions such as social work and youth work.

**Table 29. Performing voluntary work by gender**

| | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Yes | 101 | 25.5 | 104 | 13.7 |
| No | 295 | 74.5 | 653 | 86.3 |
| **Total** | **396** | **100** | **757** | **100** |

The public sector is still absorbing the majority of the University graduates, including 58% of female graduates and 47% of male graduates. While the percentage of female employment in the public sector is on the increase, the percentage of male employment is decreasing. This is strongly influenced by the fact that more males have qualifications which are in higher demand in the private sector (such as IT and Engineering). Many females work in education and health organisations which are mostly the domain of the public sector. International research shows that private employers sometimes prefer male employees when the two groups have similar qualifications and work experiences (Seta, Paulus and Baron, 2000). Such situation might also be present in Malta.

**Table 30. Sector of employment by gender**

| | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Public | 151 | 46.5 | 367 | 58.4 |
| Private* | 174 | 53.5 | 261 | 41.6 |
| **Total** | **325** | **100** | **628** | **100** |

***Includes self-employment***

Nearly half the employed University graduates work in professional/ technical occupations. These represent 59% of the male and 45% of female populations, showing a considerable gender difference in the taking up of professional/ technical jobs. It is also apparent that 41% of the employed female graduates take on executive/ clerical occupations, leaving very few females in the other areas. Perhaps the most concerning figures relate to working female graduates, 4% of whom are underemployed in unskilled jobs. This indicates that females are suffering most from having an over educated working population. On a more general note, the percentage of graduates working in executive/ clerical jobs doubled from 2002 to 2004 (from 15% to 34%).

**Table 31. Occupation by gender**

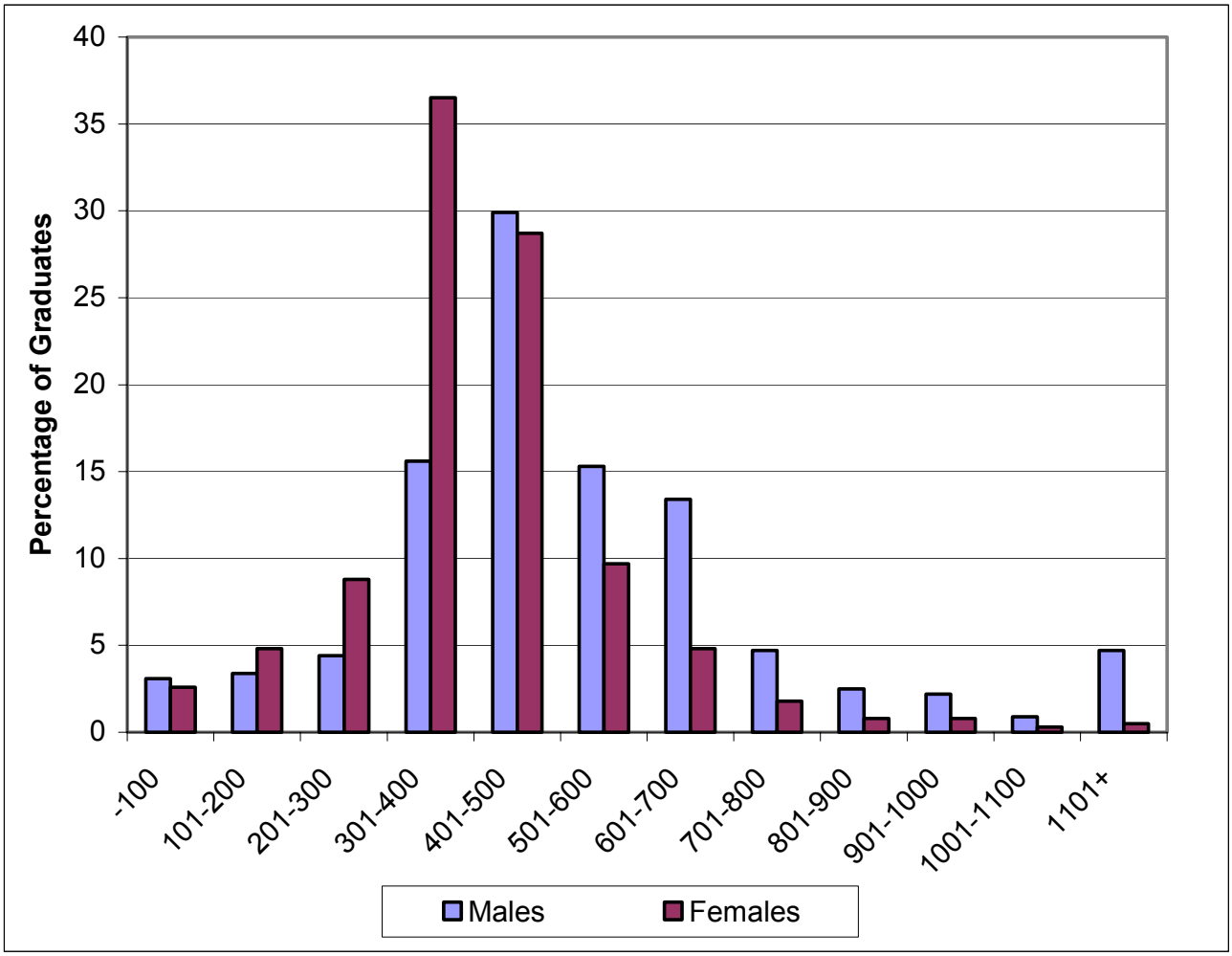
| | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Employer | 3 | 0.9 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Own account worker | 2 | 0.6 | 6 | 0.9 |
| Professional/technical | 192 | 58.9 | 286 | 44.9 |
| Administrative/managerial | 60 | 18.4 | 59 | 9.3 |
| Executive/clerical | 62 | 19 | 262 | 41.1 |
| Skilled/semiskilled | 4 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Unskilled | 3 | 0.9 | 22 | 3.5 |
| **Total** | **326** | **100** | **637** | **100** |

As can be seen in the Table and Figure below, the income earned by males is higher than that of females. More than one half of females (53%) state that their salary is less than Lm401 per month compared to only 26% of males. On the other hand, 15% of the male population earn Lm700 or more per month, whereas only 4% oft he females are in this earning bracket. The greatest discrepancy is found in the Lm1101+ bracket where there are nine males to one female who are paid such as salary. Gender differences in wages tend to persist when comparing males and females within the same occupational level (such as professional/ technical).

**Table 32. Current gross monthly income by gender (Lm)**

| | Males | | Females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| -100 | 10 | 3.1 | 16 | 2.6 |
| 101-200 | 11 | 3.4 | 30 | 4.8 |
| 201-300 | 14 | 4.4 | 55 | 8.8 |
| 301-400 | 50 | 15.6 | 229 | 36.5 |
| 401-500 | 96 | 29.9 | 180 | 28.7 |
| 501-600 | 49 | 15.3 | 61 | 9.7 |
| 601-700 | 43 | 13.4 | 30 | 4.8 |
| 701-800 | 15 | 4.7 | 11 | 1.8 |
| 801-900 | 8 | 2.5 | 5 | 0.8 |
| 901-1000 | 7 | 2.2 | 5 | 0.8 |
| 1001-1100 | 3 | 0.9 | 22 | 0.3 |
| 1101+ | 15 | 4.7 | 3 | 0.5 |
| **Total** | **321** | **100** | **627** | **100** |

**Figure 3. Current gross monthly income by gender (Lm)**



Females tend to have lower wage expectations than their male peers. More males than females expect a wage of more than Lm 700 per month. However, both male and female graduates expect higher incomes (by about 12%) than what graduates earn.

**Table 33. Expected gross monthly income**

| | Males | | Females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| 101-200 | 1 | 1.3 | 4 | 3.1 |
| 201-300 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5.5 |
| 301-400 | 8 | 10.1 | 21 | 16.5 |
| 401-500 | 27 | 34.2 | 50 | 39.4 |
| 501-600 | 16 | 20.3 | 24 | 18.9 |
| 601-700 | 10 | 12.7 | 13 | 10.2 |
| 701-800 | 6 | 7.6 | 1 | 0.8 |
| 801-900 | 1 | 1.3 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 901-1000 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 1.6 |
| 1001-1100 | 4 | 5.1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1101+ | 4 | 5.1 | 2 | 1.6 |
| **Total** | **79** | **100** | **127** | **100** |

## 3.2.3 Job-Related Attitudes by Gender

Males and females tend to have significantly different job-related attitudes. Overall, females seem to experience more adaptive attitudes than males in the sense that they are more satisfied with their job and with their relationships at work. They also experience less undue stress and can more easily balance their work and private life. While, as confirmed by data above, males earn more than females, they are not more satisfied with their salaries. On the other hand, males have more opportunities for advancement with their present employer when compared to their female peers. Gender differences in work-related attitudes tend to persist when examining respondents within the same occupational level.

**Table 34. Job-related attitudes by gender**

| | Males | | Females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** |
| Skilled enough for my job* | 4.16 | .838 | 4.21 | .763 |
| Satisfied with my job | 3.72 | 1.087 | 3.93 | 1.050 |
| Unduly stressed in my job | 3.08 | .980 | 2.88 | 1.108 |
| Can develop career with present | 3.49 | 1.177 | 3.25 | 1.268 |
| Satisfied with salary* | 2.64 | 1.094 | 2.49 | 1.121 |
| Perceive job as challenging* | 3.74 | 1.011 | 3.86 | 1.087 |
| Satisfied with colleagues relationships | 4.07 | .830 | 4.20 | .869 |
| Satisfied with respect superiors show* | 3.75 | 1.067 | 3.80 | 1.107 |
| Considering quitting job | 2.22 | 1.152 | 2.01 | 1.177 |
| Easily balance work/private life | 3.30 | 1.022 | 3.59 | 1.018 |

**=no significant difference between males and females*

## 3.2.4 Post-Graduate Study by Gender

An important difference between the two sexes emerges in relation to post-graduate study, where more males than females undertake further studies beyond their University qualification (40% and 32% respectively). The percentage of males and females in full-time studies is similar.

**Table 35. Current study by gender**

| | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Yes | 161 | 40.4 | 244 | 32.1 |
| No | 238 | 59.6 | 516 | 67.9 |
| **Total** | **399** | **100** | **760** | **100** |

Statistically there does not seem to be any significant difference between males and females in their choices of post-graduate study. Whereas, in 2002 there were many more males than females reading for doctoral and masters degrees, the situation has changed considerably in two years. More females have graduated in 2004 with doctoral degrees and the gender gap between graduates with master degrees has closed down. A slightly higher proportion of females follow LLD, bachelor degrees and diploma/certificate courses. On the other hand, more males embarked on professional training courses.

**Table 36. Further study by gender**

| | Males | | Females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Doctoral | 1 | 0.7 | 5 | 2.3 |
| Masters | 57 | 38.3 | 69 | 31.8 |
| LLD | 19 | 12.8 | 42 | 19.4 |
| Bachelor degree | 15 | 10.1 | 30 | 13.8 |
| Diploma or certificate | 30 | 20.1 | 47 | 21.7 |
| Professional training course | 21 | 14.1 | 19 | 8.8 |
| Other | 6 | 4.0 | 5 | 2.3 |
| **Total** | **149** | **100** | **217** | **100** |

### 3.2.5 Discussion of Main Findings by Gender

This study indicates significant labour market differences between males and females. Males take up more commercially needed courses relating to science and business. A larger percentage work in managerial/ administrative posts, and immediately start earning better wages. Males believe to have better job prospects with their current employer and have higher salary expectations than their female counterparts. Besides, a greater percentage of male graduates embark in post-graduate studies.

Males tend to get closer to traditional definitions of career success such as high pay and high ranking positions. These findings are in line with local and international studies showing that value differences between males and females are widespread. Abela (2001) found that Maltese men tend to prefer hard work and leadership, while Maltese women prefer politeness, respect of others and independence. Commenting of international research, Seta, Paulus and Baron (2000) state that men consistently value job dimensions that relate to status, prestige, and high incomes; whereas women value job dimensions relating to helping others and social relations. If such observations are correct, one can conclude that male graduates' ambitions tend to be harder to achieve than those of females. This can in part explain why female graduates have more positive attitudes towards their work when compared to males.

The Maltese government has in the past years worked to reduce cultural barriers that might inhibit women to reach the same work positions as men. Laws such as the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (2002) and the Equality for Men and Women Act (2003) have helped to reduce discrimination against women. The government is also getting financial aid from the European Union to increase childcare facilities throughout Maltese workplaces. Lack of such facilities is known to push females towards particular professions such as teaching. It is interesting to note that currently, Malta has one of the lowest gender pay differences in EU countries. However, much more promotion of gender equality is needed to reduce the disparities between the career achievements of males and females.

## 3.3 Responses by Age Bracket

### 3.3.1 Parents' Education by Age Bracket

Age may be a significant intervening variable in defining the correlation between graduates and their parent's level of education. The younger graduates tend to have more qualified parents than their older peers. This reflects a growth in the general population's educational level.

**Table 37. Parents' education by age bracket**

| | | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41- years | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Fathers' education | None | 6 | 1.6 | 4 | 1.1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2.4 | 10 | 8.9 | 23 | 2.0 |
| | Primary | 53 | 14.2 | 73 | 19.5 | 39 | 22.7 | 28 | 22.8 | 44 | 39.3 | 237 | 20.5 |
| | Secondary | 164 | 44.0 | 154 | 41.2 | 79 | 45.9 | 62 | 50.4 | 35 | 31.3 | 494 | 42.8 |
| | Post-secondary | 77 | 20.6 | 71 | 19.0 | 33 | 19.2 | 20 | 16.3 | 12 | 10.7 | 213 | 18.5 |
| | Tertiary | 73 | 19.6 | 72 | 19.3 | 21 | 12.2 | 10 | 8.1 | 11 | 9.8 | 187 | 16.1 |
| | **Total** | **373** | **100** | **374** | **100** | **172** | **100** | **123** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **1154** | **100** |
| Mothers' education | None | 2 | 0.5 | 4 | 1.1 | 2 | 1.2 | 2 | 1.6 | 6 | 5.4 | 16 | 1.4 |
| | Primary | 55 | 14.7 | 70 | 18.7 | 36 | 20.8 | 44 | 35.8 | 61 | 54.5 | 266 | 23.0 |
| | Secondary | 205 | 55.0 | 192 | 51.2 | 90 | 52.0 | 62 | 50.4 | 37 | 33.0 | 586 | 50.7 |
| | Post-secondary | 64 | 17.2 | 62 | 16.5 | 20 | 11.6 | 8 | 6.5 | 5 | 4.5 | 159 | 13.8 |
| | Tertiary | 47 | 12.6 | 47 | 12.5 | 25 | 14.5 | 7 | 5.7 | 3 | 2.7 | 129 | 11.2 |
| | **Total** | **373** | **100** | **375** | **100** | **173** | **100** | **123** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **1156** | **100** |

### 3.3.2 Employment Outcomes by Age Bracket

The older the age of graduates, the greater their likelihood of being employed on a full-time basis. The majority (90%) of the older graduates (41+) are in full-time employment in contrast to 55% of the 20–22 year old ones. This is in large part explained by the fact that younger graduates are more likely to further their studies on a full-time basis. One should also note that the majority of the unemployed graduates neither in full-time study nor in full-time employment are 20-22 year olds (46%).

**Table 38. Current employment by age bracket**

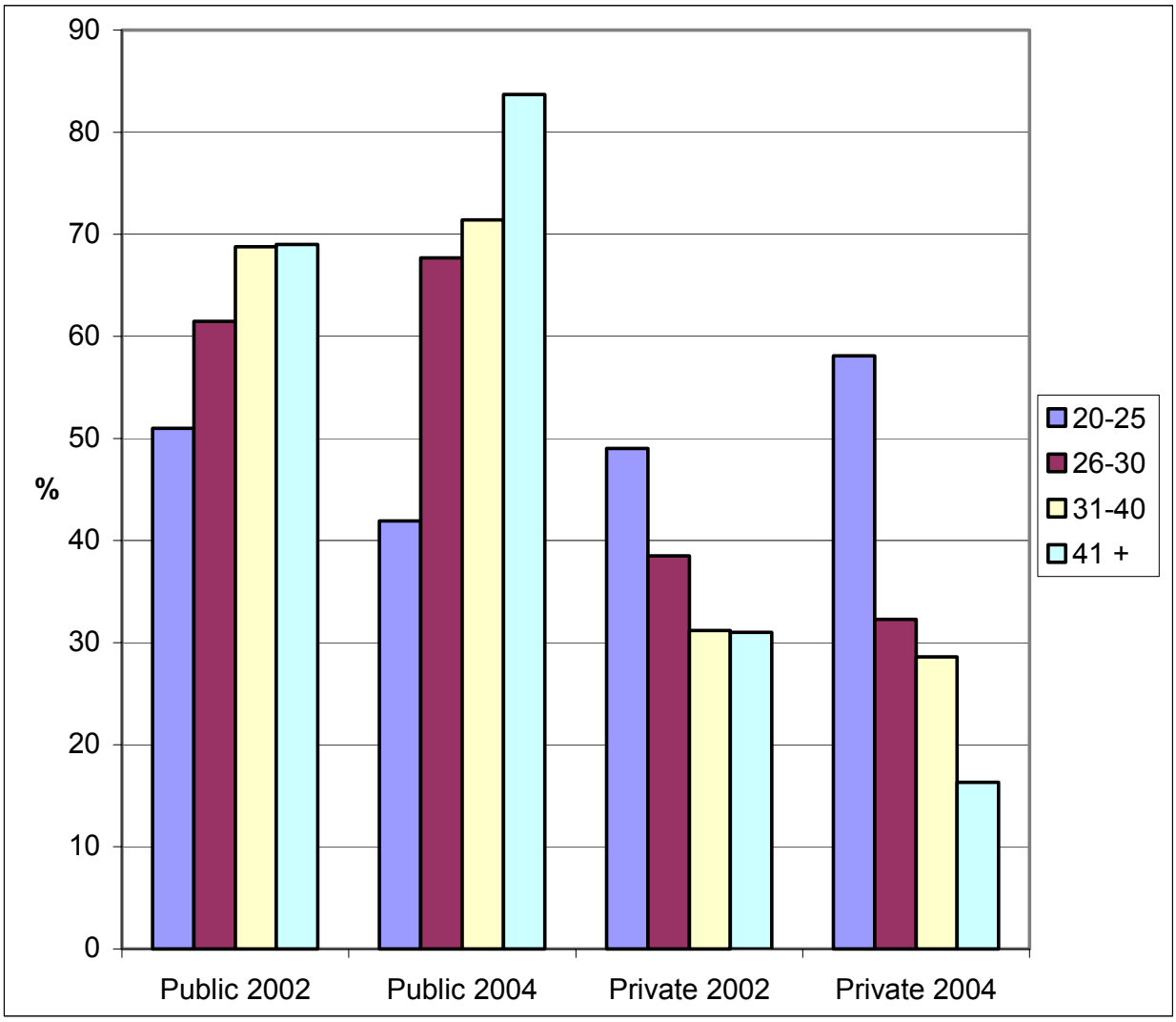
| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes (full-time) | 205 | 54.8 | 300 | 79.6 | 152 | 86.4 | 114 | 91.9 | 101 | 90.2 | 872 | 75.0 |
| Yes (part-time) | 49 | 13.1 | 25 | 6.6 | 8 | 4.5 | 5 | 4.0 | 5 | 4.5 | 92 | 7.9 |
| No | 120 | 32.1 | 52 | 13.8 | 16 | 9.1 | 5 | 4.0 | 6 | 5.4 | 199 | 17.1 |
| **Total** | **374** | **100** | **377** | **100** | **176** | **100** | **124** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **1163** | **100** |

While the public sector employs 55% of graduates, a greater proportion of young graduates work within the private sector (amounting to 62% of the 20-22 year olds and 55% of the 23-25 year olds). Older graduates are more likely to be employed in the public sector. Indeed, the majority of those aged 26 years or more work in the public sector. These results contrast with findings from previous years and indicate that the ratio of young graduates employed by the public sector is on the decrease (see Figure below). The decrease was absorbed by the private sector.

**Table 39. Sector of employment by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| public | 96 | 38.1 | 143 | 44.8 | 107 | 67.7 | 85 | 71.4 | 87 | 83.7 | 518 | 54.4 |
| private | 156 | 61.9 | 176 | 55.2 | 51 | 32.3 | 34 | 28.6 | 17 | 16.3 | 434 | 45.6 |
| **Total** | **252** | **100** | **319** | **100** | **158** | **100** | **119** | **100** | **104** | **100** | **952** | **100** |

**Figure 4. Sector of employment by age bracket**



Most graduates across the age groups work in the educational sector. This employment sector seems to be more successful in promoting lifelong learning amongst its employees when compared to other sectors. Employment in education is related to age bracket. While about a third of the 20-40 year old graduates work in education, the figure increases to nearly two thirds of the over 41 year old graduates.

The health sector, being the second largest sector of employment, tends to absorb a relatively large number of young graduates, with a lower proportion of older persons.

Very few graduates aged 41 and over work in Banking/finance/audit, Manufacturing, Consultancy, IT, Hotels/catering/entertainment/tourism, and Retail/wholesale. Among the various reasons for this, one can deduce that older students might be facing difficulties such as insufficient entry requirements, or social pressure, in choosing courses leading to careers in such fields. Besides, the private labour market is less easily accessible to persons aged 41 years and over. It is widely known that employers in competitive sectors such as IT, Hotels/catering/ entertainment/tourism, and retail/wholesale prefer recruiting younger persons rather than older ones. Another potential contributor for this result is that older persons working in the above mentioned fields find it harder to spare enough time to follow a course at University when compared to their peers working in Education, Health and other public-dominated employment fields. Besides, they might get their training directly from their employer.

**Table 40. Field of employment by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Education | 81 | 32.5 | 98 | 30.6 | 57 | 35.8 | 49 | 41.2 | 66 | 62.9 | 351 | 36.9 |
| Health | 26 | 10.4 | 58 | 18.1 | 20 | 12.6 | 17 | 14.3 | 9 | 8.6 | 130 | 13.7 |
| Banking/finance/audit | 30 | 12.0 | 59 | 18.4 | 14 | 8.8 | 13 | 10.9 | 2 | 1.9 | 118 | 12.4 |
| Manufacturing | 20 | 8.0 | 20 | 6.3 | 8 | 5.0 | 4 | 3.4 | 2 | 1.9 | 54 | 5.7 |
| Transport/communication | 11 | 4.4 | 14 | 4.4 | 7 | 4.4 | 8 | 6.7 | 4 | 3.8 | 44 | 4.6 |
| Consultancy | 8 | 3.2 | 21 | 6.6 | 9 | 5.7 | 5 | 4.2 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 4.5 |
| Social | 14 | 5.6 | 10 | 3.1 | 6 | 3.8 | 4 | 3.4 | 7 | 6.7 | 41 | 4.3 |
| IT | 15 | 6.0 | 9 | 2.8 | 10 | 6.3 | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | 1.0 | 38 | 4.0 |
| Hotels/ catering/ | 14 | 5.6 | 9 | 2.8 | 3 | 1.9 | 1 | .8 | 2 | 1.9 | 29 | 3.0 |
| Retail/wholesale | 16 | 6.4 | 4 | 1.3 | 4 | 2.5 | 4 | 3.4 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 2.9 |
| Environment/ | 4 | 1.6 | 6 | 1.9 | 6 | 3.8 | 4 | 3.4 | 5 | 4.8 | 25 | 2.6 |
| Other | 10 | 4.0 | 12 | 3.8 | 15 | 9.4 | 7 | 5.9 | 7 | 6.7 | 51 | 5.4 |
| **Total** | **249** | **100** | **320** | **100** | **159** | **100** | **119** | **100** | **105** | **100** | **952** | **100** |

Most new young graduates are employed in professional/ technical occupations. Older graduates seem to experience greater difficulties than younger peers to find employment in this occupational level. 59% of the 41 years and over graduates tend to find employment in executive/ clerical jobs. These results might seem surprising, as in general, older graduates have several years of work experience as part of their portfolio, which should help them find employment in higher occupational levels. However, many older graduates might have completed diplomas (due to easier entry requirements and greater opportunities of part-time courses) which might not have afforded the same job mobility which a degree tends to provide. Besides, being older they may be more wary of change and tend to take fewer risks.

**Table 41. Type of occupation by age bracket**

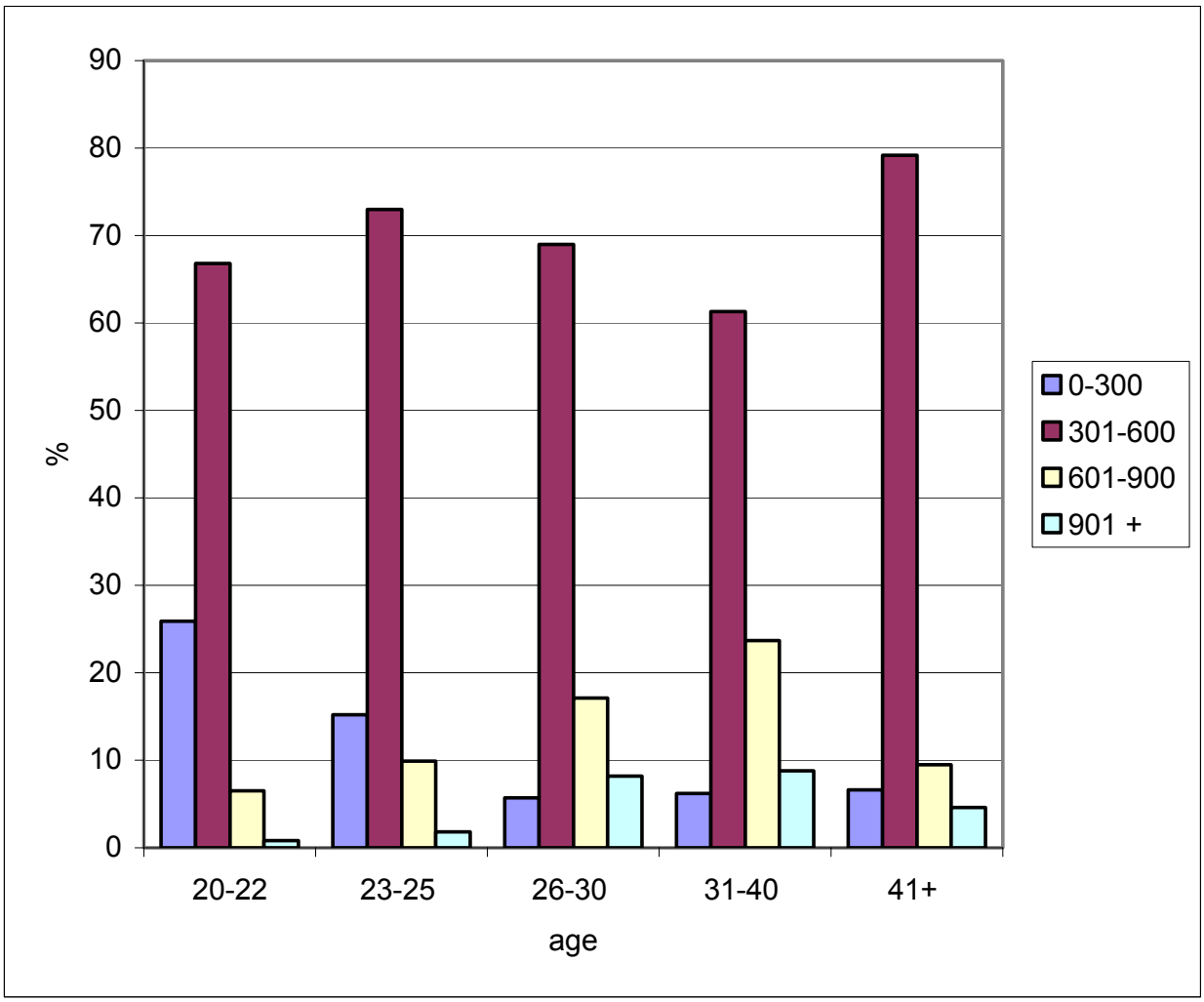
| | 20-22 | | 23-25 | | 26-30 | | 31-40 | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Employer/own account | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | 0.9 | 5 | 0.5 |
| Professional/technical | 136 | 54.2 | 204 | 62.8 | 73 | 45.3 | 38 | 31.9 | 26 | 24.5 | 477 | 49.6 |
| Administrative/managerial | 21 | 8.4 | 20 | 6.2 | 37 | 23.0 | 27 | 22.7 | 15 | 14.2 | 120 | 12.5 |
| Executive/clerical | 75 | 29.9 | 88 | 27.1 | 48 | 29.8 | 49 | 41.2 | 63 | 59.4 | 323 | 33.6 |
| Skilled/semiskilled | 1 | 0.4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.6 | 1 | .8 | 1 | 0.9 | 4 | 0.4 |
| Unskilled | 13 | 5.2 | 9 | 2.8 | 2 | 1.2 | 1 | .8 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 2.6 |
| **Total** | **251** | **100** | **325** | **100** | **161** | **100** | **119** | **100** | **106** | **100** | **962** | **100** |

Age seems also to be an important variable as regards level of wages. The 31-40 years old age bracket tends to have the highest percentage of graduates earning over Lm600. This might be partly explained by the work experience that older graduates have gained prior to entering University, as well as from the employers' trust in assigning them work requiring maturity. Nevertheless, the monthly income for graduates in the 41+category tends to be lower than that of the 31-40 year olds. This might be partly attributable to the kind of courses they choose at University. The oldest group of graduates are often specialised in courses that are less in demand in the private sector.

**Table 42. Gross monthly income by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| 0-300 | 64 | 25.9 | 49 | 15.2 | 9 | 5.7 | 7 | 6.2 | 7 | 6.6 | 136 | 14.3 |
| 301-600 | 165 | 66.8 | 235 | 73 | 109 | 69 | 70 | 61.3 | 84 | 79.2 | 663 | 70 |
| 601-900 | 16 | 6.5 | 32 | 9.9 | 27 | 17.1 | 27 | 23.7 | 10 | 9.5 | 112 | 11.8 |
| 901 + | 2 | 0.8 | 6 | 1.8 | 13 | 8.2 | 10 | 8.8 | 5 | 4.6 | 36 | 3.8 |
| **Total** | **247** | **100** | **322** | **100** | **158** | **100** | **114** | **100** | **106** | **100** | **947** | **100** |

**Figure 5. Gross monthly income by age bracket (Lm)**



### 3.3.3 Job-Related Attitudes by Age Bracket

Older graduates tend to feel more skilled for their job than their younger peers. While about 85% of those aged 20-25 feel skilled enough at work, this figure rises to over 93% for those over 31 years old. The greater self-confidence and experience of mature graduates are probably the main reasons for such results.

**Table 43. Skilled enough for my job by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 11 | 4.4 | 16 | 5.0 | 9 | 5.6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1.9 | 11 | 4.4 |
| Neutral | 26 | 10.4 | 35 | 10.8 | 10 | 6.3 | 8 | 6.7 | 3 | 2.9 | 26 | 10.4 |
| Agree | 213 | 85.2 | 272 | 84.2 | 141 | 88.1 | 111 | 93.3 | 98 | 95.1 | 213 | 85.2 |
| **Total** | **250** | **100** | **323** | **100** | **160** | **100** | **119** | **100** | **103** | **100** | **250** | **100** |

Stress seems to increase along the age brackets until it reaches its peak in the 26 to 30 year olds. Then it starts sloping down. While only 23% of the 20-22 year olds feel stressed in their job, the figure increases to 40% among the 26-30 year olds.

**Table 44. Unduly stressed in my job by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 102 | 41.5 | 106 | 32.8 | 39 | 25.0 | 37 | 31.6 | 39 | 39.8 | 323 | 34.4 |
| Neutral | 88 | 35.8 | 120 | 37.2 | 55 | 35.3 | 45 | 38.5 | 31 | 31.6 | 339 | 36.1 |
| Agree | 56 | 22.8 | 97 | 30.0 | 62 | 39.7 | 35 | 29.9 | 28 | 28.6 | 278 | 29.6 |
| **Total** | **246** | **100** | **323** | **100** | **156** | **100** | **117** | **100** | **98** | **100** | **940** | **100** |

There is a negative correlation between age and satisfaction with salary. As employers get older, they tend to expect higher salaries. It looks as if their expectations are not being met. 41+ year olds are more dissatisfied with their salaries when compared to their peers. On the other hand, 20-22 year olds are the least dissatisfied. Salary expectations might increase with age while remuneration might not increase proportionately. The 23-25 year old age bracket lies outside the mentioned trend as its respondents are more dissatisfied than expected.

**Table 45. Satisfied with salary by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 107 | 42.8 | 178 | 55.5 | 83 | 51.9 | 64 | 54.2 | 62 | 59.0 | 494 | 51.8 |
| Neutral | 70 | 28.0 | 75 | 23.4 | 37 | 23.1 | 27 | 22.9 | 29 | 27.6 | 238 | 24.9 |
| Agree | 73 | 29.2 | 68 | 21.2 | 40 | 25.0 | 27 | 22.9 | 14 | 13.3 | 222 | 23.3 |
| **Total** | **250** | **100** | **321** | **100** | **160** | **100** | **118** | **100** | **105** | **100** | **954** | **100** |

86% of the graduates aged 41 years and over state they do not have any intention of quitting their job. This contrasts with the other graduates, especially those in the 26-40 years age brackets, in which only around 58% do not consider quitting their job. This might be due to the fact that older persons might experience greater difficulties to find new employment and so they think less about quitting what they have. On the other hand 26-40 year old graduates tend to be still in search of a job that is commensurate with their qualification and which gives the optimum extrinsic and intrinsic level of satisfaction.

**Table 46. Consider quitting job by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 171 | 68.4 | 232 | 72.3 | 95 | 59.4 | 68 | 57.6 | 89 | 85.6 | 655 | 68.7 |
| Neutral | 41 | 16.4 | 53 | 16.5 | 39 | 24.4 | 31 | 26.3 | 10 | 9.6 | 174 | 18.3 |
| Agree | 38 | 15.2 | 36 | 11.2 | 26 | 16.3 | 19 | 16.1 | 5 | 4.8 | 124 | 13.0 |
| **Total** | **250** | **100** | **321** | **100** | **160** | **100** | **118** | **100** | **104** | **100** | **953** | **100** |

The data show that there is no significant difference between the various age groups with regards to their ability to balance work and private life. Most respondents within each age bracket can easily manage the work-life balance. While, as can be seen in the Table below, graduates aged 41 years or older seem to find it easier to strike a balance between work and private life, the difference with the other groups is too small to be statistically relevant.

**Table 47. Easily balance work/private life by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 40 | 16.0 | 63 | 19.6 | 29 | 18.1 | 23 | 19.3 | 14 | 13.5 | 169 | 17.7 |
| Neutral | 75 | 30.0 | 81 | 25.2 | 40 | 25.0 | 29 | 24.4 | 18 | 17.3 | 243 | 25.4 |
| Agree | 135 | 54.0 | 178 | 55.3 | 91 | 56.9 | 67 | 56.3 | 72 | 69.2 | 543 | 56.9 |
| **Total** | **250** | **100** | **322** | **100** | **160** | **100** | **119** | **100** | **104** | **100** | **955** | **100** |

### 3.3.4 Post-graduate Study by Age Bracket

Nearly half of the graduates aged 20-22 are pursuing further studies. This amount drops to around a third in the 23-30 age brackets, and to less than a quarter in the over 31 age brackets. A similar distribution is evident in those pursuing full-time studies. The motivation and opportunity to further one's studies seem to decrease considerably with age. Young graduates feel less pressure to start working immediately after their first University course and many prefer to enrol in post-graduate courses before starting their career. 20-22 year olds are the only graduates who tend to be more in full-time rather than part-time studies.

**Table 48. Current study by age bracket**

| | 20-22 years | | 23-25 years | | 26-30 years | | 31-40 years | | 41 years + | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes (full-time) | 119 | 31.8 | 47 | 12.5 | 15 | 8.6 | 7 | 5.7 | 6 | 5.4 | 194 | 16.8 |
| Yes (part-time) | 61 | 16.3 | 66 | 17.6 | 42 | 24.1 | 22 | 17.9 | 19 | 17.1 | 210 | 18.2 |
| No | 194 | 51.9 | 262 | 69.9 | 117 | 67.2 | 94 | 76.4 | 86 | 77.5 | 753 | 65.1 |
| **Total** | **374** | **100** | **375** | **100** | **174** | **100** | **123** | **100** | **111** | **100** | **1157** | **100** |

### 3.3.5 Discussion of Main Findings by Age Bracket

The educational growth among the Maltese population can be seen from the large number of graduates whose parents have not completed tertiary education. Graduates tend to have a higher level of education than their parents.

Younger graduates are more likely to work in the private sector when compared to their older peers. This follows government's policy to diminish the size of the public sector by, among others, reducing the number of new recruits. Older graduates tend not to be employed in professions such as IT, Hotels/catering/ entertainment/tourism, and Retail/wholesale, which form part of the private sector. They also seem to experience greater difficulties to find employment in professional/ technical occupations. These results indicate that younger graduates might have better job prospects with a wider variety of occupations too choose from.

Younger graduates are also less likely to be employed in the early months following their graduation and more often pursue further studies beyond their first University qualification on a full-time basis. They probably feel less the need to start working immediately and can afford to spend more time in education. Such behaviour might also indicate the fear that young graduates have of being unable to find a good job with their first University course due to the qualification inflation.

Following a University course as a mature student also has certain advantages. For example, older graduates tend to be better paid than younger ones. Greater work experience and confidence in their skills are probably among the most important reasons why 31-40 year olds receive the best salaries.

Social and psychological reasons can be used to explain the fact that fewer older graduates consider quitting their current job. On the one hand, it is widely known that employers are less willing to employ persons aged 40+. Younger workers tend to be more attractive to many employers as they are assumed to be more energetic and more receptive to learning new skills. On the other hand, according to Super's (1957) life span theory of career development, young adults are more prone to experiment with their careers than older ones. Super believed that the process of maturation tends to change the workers' frame of mind and helps them reach a stabilisation stage at around 44 years which makes them less willing to change job.

## 3.4 Responses by Classification

Only the responses of the 624 first degree holders are included in this chapter.

### 3.4.1 Parents' Education and Occupation by Classification

Parents' level of education and occupational status do not seem to be significantly related to the achievement of University students. In other words, graduates with highly qualified fathers and mothers or with parents who hold professional or managerial jobs do not achieve significantly higher grades in relation to other graduates. It can be argued that children with higher educational backgrounds tend to choose more demanding courses within different faculties which might apply different criteria in grading their students. This might lower the grades they obtain. However, an analysis of parents' educational and employment background with respondents' classification within the different faculties and institutes shows that the same results hold true for respondents from every faculty and institute. So, a law student with a high social class family background does not tend to obtain higher grades than students with a low class family background. The differences in the two tables below are minimal and not statistically significant. These findings confirm the data of the previous study.

**Table 49. Fathers' occupation when respondents were 16 years old by classification (%)**

| | 1st Class/ | 2nd Class Upper/ | 2nd Class | 3rd Class/ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer/ own account | 9.3 | 10.0 | 16.6 | 19.1 |
| Professional/technical | 31.5 | 16.0 | 16.6 | 14.9 |
| Administrative/ managerial | 20.4 | 21.2 | 19.2 | 17.0 |
| Executive/ clerical | 13.0 | 14.4 | 11.9 | 12.8 |
| Skilled/ semiskilled | 13.0 | 13.2 | 11.9 | 8.5 |
| Unskilled | 7.4 | 12.4 | 10.6 | 14.9 |
| Unemployed | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Deceased | 1.9 | 1.6 | 2.6 | 2.1 |
| Pensioner | 1.9 | 2.4 | 1.3 | 2.1 |
| Student | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| No answer | 1.9 | 7.6 | 6.6 | 8.5 |
| **Total (Count)** | **54** | **250** | **151** | **47** |

**Table 50. Parents' level of Education**

| | Both primary and/ or secondary | | One primary/ secondary and one post-secondary or tertiary | | Both post-secondary or tertiary | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| First Class/Category I | 29 | 10.0 | 12 | 9.8 | 13 | 15.1 | 54 | 10.8 |
| Second Class Upper/ Category IIA | 139 | 47.9 | 69 | 56.6 | 40 | 46.5 | 248 | 49.8 |
| Second Class Lower/ Category IIB | 91 | 31.4 | 33 | 27.0 | 25 | 29.1 | 149 | 29.9 |
| Third Class/ Category III | 31 | 10.7 | 8 | 6.6 | 8 | 9.3 | 47 | 9.4 |
| **Total** | **290** | **100** | **122** | **100** | **86** | **100** | **498** | **100** |

## 3.4.2 Employment Outcomes by Classification

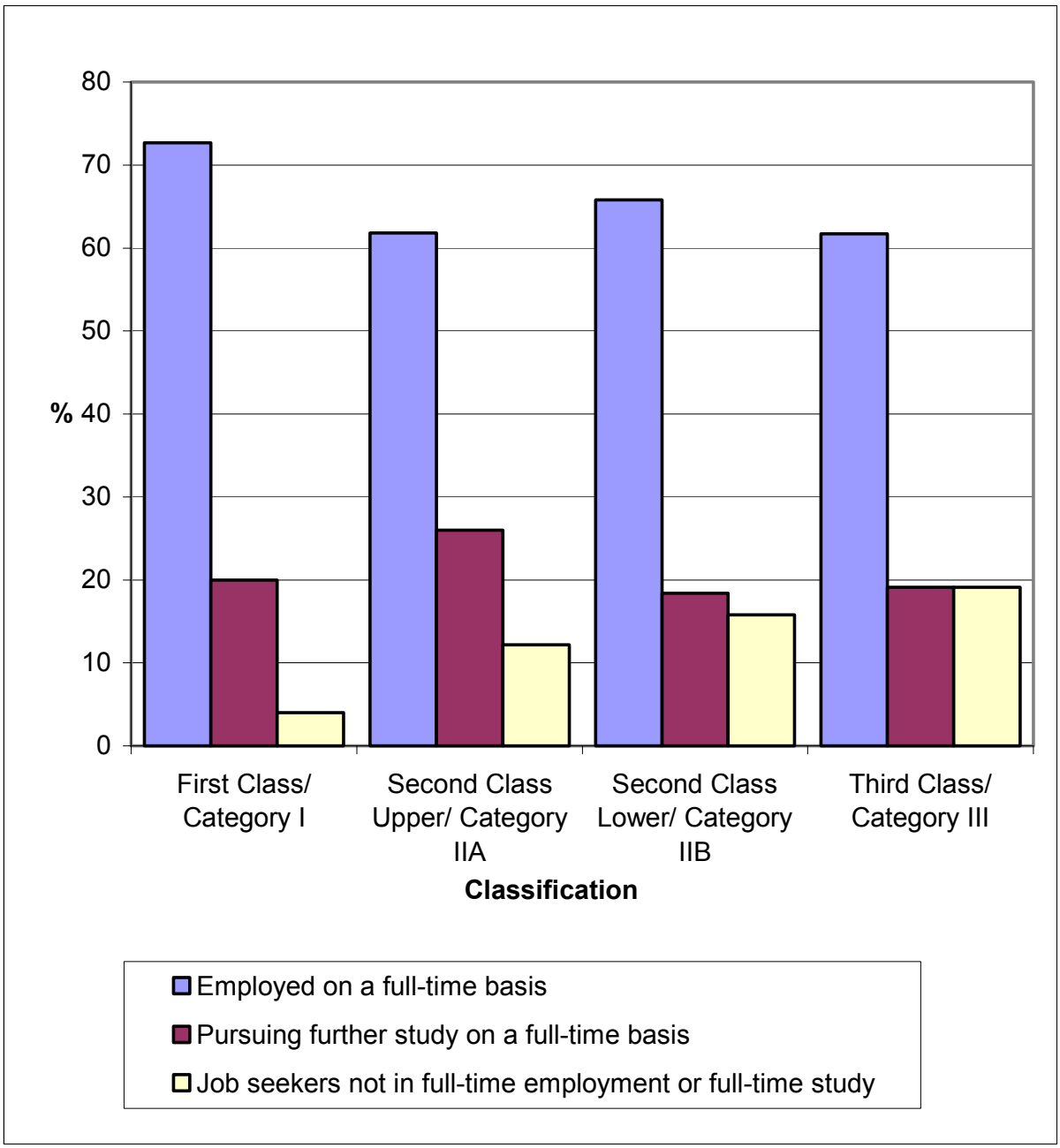
While results do not have high statistical significance, the lower the classification, the higher the number of graduates who are neither in full-time employment nor study and are seeking employment (see Table and Figure below). The risk of unemployment for First Class/ Category I graduates in the months following graduation tends to be rather low. In contrast, the odds of students with a low University grade getting a job in the first year after graduation are not high. Thus, the higher the grade, the higher the odds of obtaining a job. Data also reveals that among Second Class Upper/ Category II A graduates, there seems to be a higher tendency of pursuing further study, research or training on a full-time basis than among their peers (including First Class/ Category I graduates).

**Table 51. General outcomes by classification**

| | Employed on a full-time basis | | Pursuing further study on a full-time basis | | Job seekers neither in full-time employment nor full-time study | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | %* | Count | %* | Count | %* |
| First Class/ Category I | 40 | 72.7 | 11 | 20.0 | 4 | 7.3 |
| Second Class Upper/ Category IIA | 157 | 61.8 | 66 | 26.0 | 31 | 12.2 |
| Second Class Lower/ Category IIB | 100 | 65.8 | 28 | 18.4 | 24 | 15.8 |
| Third Class/ Category III | 29 | 61.7 | 9 | 19.1 | 9 | 19.1 |
| **Total** | **326** | **64.2** | **114** | **22.4** | **68** | **13.4** |

**% of total respondents of the specific classification*

**Figure 6. General outcomes by classification**




There does not seem to be any significant differences in job search approach or strategy adopted by graduates with different classifications. Nevertheless, as found in the previous study, a smaller proportion of graduates with higher graded classification are employed in the Education and Health Divisions of the public sector. This indicates that the private sector may attract more the higher-classified graduates. This argument is support by the second Table below. Graduates possessing the highest classifications are also slightly more likely to be approached by the employer (21% for 1st Class/ Category I graduates and 20% for 2nd Class Upper/ Category II A graduates) than those obtaining the lowest qualifications.

**Table 52. Type of job search by classification (%)**

| | 1st Class/ | 2nd Class | 2nd Class | 3rd Class/ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Advert newspaper | 19.0 | 30.2 | 28.8 | 27.3 |
| Relatives/ friends | 9.5 | 14.0 | 20.2 | 15.2 |
| Employment agency | 7.1 | 6.1 | 5.8 | 9.1 |
| Info at University | 11.9 | 8.4 | 5.8 | 9.1 |
| Education/ health depts. | 7.1 | 8.4 | 9.6 | 24.2 |
| Internal call/ promotion | 7.1 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 0.0 |
| Approached by employer | 21.4 | 19.6 | 11.5 | 6.1 |
| Sent CV/application on own | 4.8 | 5.0 | 8.7 | 6.1 |
| Other | 11.9 | 5.0 | 5.8 | 3.0 |
| **Total (Count)** | **42** | **179** | **104** | **33** |

**Table 53. Sector of Employment**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | | 3rd Class/ Category III | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Public | 15 | 33.3 | 59 | 31.6 | 34 | 30.4 | 16 | 44.4 |
| Private | 30 | 66.7 | 128 | 68.4 | 78 | 69.6 | 20 | 55.6 |
| **Total** | **45** | **100** | **187** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **36** | **100** |

There is no significant difference among the differently classified groups with regards to whether their University course was required to apply for their current job. While the Table below seems to indicate that more top classification students are in jobs requiring their University training than their peers with lower University grades, the difference is too small to be of statistical importance.

**Table 54. University course requirement to apply for job by classification**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | | 3rd Class/ Category III | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes | 36 | 80.0 | 129 | 69.4 | 82 | 73.2 | 24 | 68.6 |
| No | 9 | 20.0 | 57 | 30.6 | 30 | 26.8 | 11 | 31.4 |
| **Total** | **45** | **100** | **186** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **35** | **100** |

In spite of this, data reveals a strong correlation between classification and income of graduates. The higher one's classification, the higher the salary one earns within the first year of work after graduating. While a 25% of 1st Class/ Category I graduates earn more than Lm500, only 15% of 3rd Class/ Category III claim similar earnings.

**Table 55. Current gross income of graduates by classification**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | | 3rd Class/ Category III | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Less than Lm401 | 11 | 24.4 | 81 | 44.0 | 51 | 45.5 | 21 | 61.8 |
| Lm401 to Lm500 | 23 | 51.1 | 61 | 33.2 | 44 | 39.3 | 8 | 23.5 |
| More than Lm500 | 11 | 24.4 | 42 | 22.8 | 17 | 15.2 | 5 | 14.7 |
| **Total** | **45** | **100** | **184** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **34** | **100** |

## 3.4.3 Job Related Attitudes by Classification

Overall, data does not reveal any significant correlation between classification and attitudes to work, even though 1st Class/ Category I graduates are more likely to be satisfied with their current work. This might be due to a potentially wider choice of jobs and a greater ability to adapt to their work environment.

**Table 56. Job Satisfaction by classification**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | | 3rd Class/ Category III | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 2 | 4.5 | 32 | 17.3 | 10 | 8.9 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Neutral | 7 | 15.9 | 35 | 18.9 | 19 | 17.0 | 7 | 19.4 |
| Agree | 35 | 79.5 | 118 | 63.8 | 83 | 74.1 | 23 | 63.9 |
| **Total** | **44** | **100** | **185** | **100** | **112** | **100** | **36** | **100** |

1st Class/ Category I graduates also tend to be less reluctant to quit their job than their peers. Higher classification might have helped them to get more extrinsic and intrinsic rewards of work.

**Table 57. Considering to quit job by classification**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | | 3rd Class/ Category III | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Disagree | 36 | 80.0 | 112 | 60.2 | 81 | 72.3 | 26 | 72.2 |
| Neutral | 7 | 15.6 | 39 | 21.0 | 19 | 17.0 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Agree | 2 | 4.4 | 35 | 18.8 | 12 | 10.7 | 4 | 11.1 |
| **Total** | 45 | 100 | 186 | 100 | 112 | 100 | 36 | 100 |

## 3.4.4 Employment History by Classification

Classification is not significantly related to employment prior to graduating. The Table below shows that the percentage of graduates employed before graduating does not vary among different classifications.

**Table 58. Employed before graduating by classification**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | | 3rd Class/ Category III | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** | **Count** | **%** |
| Yes | 23 | 53.5 | 82 | 44.3 | 49 | 44.1 | 19 | 52.8 |
| No | 20 | 46.5 | 103 | 55.7 | 62 | 55.9 | 17 | 47.2 |
| **Total** | **43** | **100** | **185** | **100** | **111** | **100** | **36** | **100** |

## 3.4.5 Post-graduate Study by Classification

Classification does not seem to be strongly related to the type of further study. However, higher classified graduates seem to have better prospects of furthering their studies by reading for a Master degree. Apart from possibly being more ambitious, higher classified graduates are also more easily accepted for such courses.

**Table 59. Further study by classification (%)**

| | 1st Class/ Category I | 2nd Class Upper/ Category IIA | 2nd Class Lower/ Category IIB | 3rd Class/ Category III | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctoral | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| Masters | 66.7 | 41.3 | 36.7 | 17.6 | 40.8 |
| LLD | 14.3 | 12.5 | 12.2 | 17.6 | 13.1 |
| Bachelor degree | 9.5 | 16.3 | 16.3 | 11.8 | 15.2 |
| Diploma or certificate | 9.5 | 20.2 | 16.3 | 17.6 | 17.8 |
| Professional training course | 0.0 | 6.7 | 18.4 | 35.3 | 11.5 |
| Other | 0.0 | 1.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Total (Count)** | **21** | **104** | **49** | **17** | **191** |

## 3.4.6 Discussion of Main Findings by Classification

While family background might influence whether one pursues tertiary education or which course one chooses at University, it does not seem to be a good predictor of one's grades at University. In other words, in order to achieve good grades, one does not necessarily require highly educated parents or parents in white collar jobs. The inference may be that the University of Malta is operating on the principles of meritocracy, rewarding motivation and achievement and ignoring status.

Classification is a very important variable as it is related to various career outcomes. Higher classified graduates risk less unemployment and are more likely to be in full-time jobs or to further studies which often lead to a Master degree. Those who get a job are more often approached directly by the employers themselves and tend to earn higher incomes in the first year of work after graduating. 1st Class/ Category I graduates are overall more satisfied on their job and think less about quitting it.

A comparison of graduates in 2000, 2002 and 2004 reveals that achieving a 1st Class/ Category I classification is becoming always more important to find a full-time job within the first year after graduating (see Table below). On the other hand, 3rd Class/ Category III graduates are finding it harder to land a full-time job and are more often relegated to part-time employment, at least in the initial stages of their career.

**Table 60. Comparison of Employed by classification (%)**

| | Year | 1st class/ Category I | 2nd class upper/ Category IIA | 2nd class Lower/ Category IIB | 3rd class/ Category III |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full-time | 2000 | 88.4 | 87.6 | 87.7 | 91.7 |
| | 2002 | 73.1 | 87.9 | 88.8 | 92.0 |
| | 2004 | 91.7 | 84.4 | 87.7 | 76.9 |
| Part-time | 2000 | 11.6 | 12.4 | 12.3 | 8.3 |
| | 2002 | 26.9 | 12.1 | 11.2 | 8.0 |
| | 2004 | 8.3 | 15.6 | 12.3 | 23.1 |

## 3.5 Responses by Faculties and Institutes

### 3.5.1 Parents' Education and Occupation by Faculty/ Institute

The parents' educational Graduates from different faculties and institutes tend to have parents with varying educational levels. *Medicine and Surgery* graduates have by far the most qualified parents (both parents of 41% of the group attained post-secondary or tertiary education). *Laws*, *Science* and *Engineering* graduates also tend to have highly educated parents. These tend to be high-status courses which universities traditionally offer. On the other hand, *Education* and *CLS* graduates have the least qualified parents, which might indicate that they attract students with low family social background.

**Table 61. Parents' education by faculty/ institute**

| | Both parents with primary/secondary | | One parent with post-secondary/ tertiary | | Both parents with post-secondary/ tertiary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Arts | 45 | 55.6 | 25 | 30.9 | 11 | 13.6 |
| FEMA | 179 | 60.7 | 82 | 27.8 | 34 | 11.5 |
| Education | 207 | 67.4 | 58 | 18.9 | 42 | 13.7 |
| Engineering | 12 | 44.4 | 10 | 37.0 | 5 | 18.5 |
| Laws | 38 | 34.2 | 42 | 37.8 | 31 | 27.9 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 7 | 18.9 | 15 | 40.5 | 15 | 40.5 |
| Science | 9 | 32.1 | 13 | 46.4 | 6 | 21.4 |
| IT | 8 | 47.1 | 7 | 41.2 | 2 | 11.8 |
| CCT | 21 | 46.7 | 16 | 35.6 | 8 | 17.8 |
| IHC | 51 | 54.8 | 28 | 30.1 | 14 | 15.1 |
| CLS | 23 | 65.7 | 8 | 22.9 | 4 | 11.4 |
| Others | 53 | 62.4 | 24 | 28.2 | 8 | 9.4 |
| **Total** | **653** | **56.2** | **328** | **28.3** | **180** | **15.5** |

While this data might be seen as pointing to a relation between social class and the choice of particular courses at University, there is no statistically significant difference between parents' occupation and faculty of graduate or degree conferred.

Besides, there is no statistically significant tendency for University graduates to take up occupations at a similar level to that of their parents in the early part of their careers. However, there is a tendency that graduates in professional/ technical occupations (23%) have fathers in professional/ technical occupations while most respondents working in administrative/ managerial jobs (29%) have fathers in similar occupations. On the other hand, many fathers of respondents in executive/ clerical jobs worked in skilled/ semiskilled (24%) or clerical/ executive (19%) occupations.

**Table 62. Fathers' occupation when respondents were 16 years old and respondents' occupation**

| | | Employed respondents' occupation | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Employer | | Own account worker | | Professional/ Technical | | Administrative/ Managerial | | Executive/ Clerical | | Skilled/ Semiskilled | | Unskilled | |
| | | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Fathers' occupation | Employer/ own account worker | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 52 | 11.7 | 17 | 15.3 | 34 | 11.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 9.1 |
| | Professional/ Technical | 1 | 25.0 | 2 | 28.6 | 103 | 23.2 | 13 | 11.7 | 33 | 11.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 13.6 |
| | Administrative/ Managerial | 2 | 50.0 | 2 | 28.6 | 80 | 18.0 | 32 | 28.8 | 44 | 14.9 | 2 | 50.0 | 5 | 22.7 |
| | Executive/ Clerical | 1 | 25.0 | 1 | 14.3 | 58 | 13.1 | 16 | 14.4 | 56 | 18.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 18.2 |
| | Skilled/ Semiskilled | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 28.6 | 77 | 17.3 | 17 | 15.3 | 70 | 23.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 9.1 |
| | Unskilled | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 48 | 10.8 | 10 | 9.0 | 43 | 14.5 | 1 | 25.0 | 4 | 18.2 |
| | Others | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 26 | 5.9 | 6 | 5.4 | 16 | 5.4 | 1 | 25.0 | 2 | 9.1 |
| **Total** | | **4** | **100** | **7** | **100** | **444** | **100** | **111** | **100** | **296** | **100** | **4** | **100** | **22** | **100** |

### 3.5.2 Employment Outcomes by Faculty/ Institute

*Medicine & Surgery* and *CLS* graduates have the highest employment ratios (100% and 94.3% respectively). In the case of *Medicine & Surgery* this is mostly influenced by government employment contracts which bind them to offer their services to government in the initial years of their career. New general practitioners are usually employed by the government in the health sector where most of them normally remain for a number of years, before taking up further specialisation abroad or establishing their private practice.

Nearly all *CLS* graduates (94%) are employed on a full-time basis as they tend to be of a mature age and had already established their careers before embarking on their University course. *CLS* courses are attractive to adult workers because they have relatively low entry requirements, are work-oriented and are offered on a part-time basis.

A very high ratio of *Education* and *Engineering* graduates, (both stand at 92.6%), are also in full-time employment, less than a year after they have completed their University studies.

On the other hand, the highest percentage of respondents continuing their studies are *Laws* graduates (63.4%). This is due to the fact that the qualifications of notary public and lawyer are attained from post-graduate courses. The BA in Legal and Humanistic Studies has little, if any, value in the labour market.

The highest ratios of graduate job seekers neither in full-time employment nor in full-time study are from *CCT* (22.2%), *IHC* (22.1%) and *Arts* (21.0%). The labour market for the communications sector has become very limited. While the liberalisation of television and radio stations in the 1990s led to the creation of many posts in the field, over the years the supply seems to have saturated the demand.

The Health sector is in large part run by the government, and thus, is experiencing the effects of the government's policy to reduce public deficit by, among others, decreasing the number of persons working in the public sector. In recent months, the Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses took industrial actions following government decision not to employ the nurses who had graduated.

On the other hand, several *Arts* courses tend not to be job-oriented, and this makes it harder on the graduates to land a job. But then, a proportion of *Arts* graduates may not have pursued a University course with the intention of getting a job, but as a means of personal enrichment through knowledge attainment.

It is interesting to note that a high unemployment rate together with the availability of postgraduate courses in *Arts* is linked to a greater ratio of graduates who pursue further studies after finishing their degrees.

**Table 63. Employment status by faculty/ institute**

| | Employed on a full-time basis | | Pursuing further study on a full-time basis | | Job seekers neither in full-time employment nor full-time study | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Count** | **%*** | **Count** | **%*** | **Count** | **%*** |
| Arts | 35 | 43.2 | 28 | 34.6 | 17 | 21.0 |
| FEMA | 232 | 77.9 | 51 | 17.2 | 15 | 5.0 |
| Education | 287 | 92.6 | 9 | 2.9 | 9 | 2.9 |
| Engineering | 25 | 92.6 | 2 | 7.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Laws | 35 | 31.3 | 71 | 63.4 | 9 | 8.0 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 37 | 100.0 | 3 | 8.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Science | 23 | 82.1 | 4 | 14.3 | 1 | 3.6 |
| IT | 13 | 76.5 | 2 | 11.8 | 1 | 5.9 |
| CCT | 29 | 64.4 | 3 | 6.8 | 10 | 22.2 |
| IHC | 67 | 72.8 | 4 | 4.3 | 21 | 22.1 |
| CLS | 33 | 94.3 | 3 | 8.8 | 2 | 5.7 |
| Others** | 60 | 70.6 | 14 | 17.1 | 11 | 18.0 |
| **Total** | **876** | **75.1** | **194** | **16.7** | **96** | **8.2** |

**% of total respondents of the specific faculty/institute.*
*** Includes respondents who did not specify which faculty/institute they got their qualification from.*

A fifth of all job seekers neither in full-time employment nor in full-time study are BA (Hons) graduates. The second largest groups of jobs seekers are B.Communications and B. Com/(Hons) graduates, followed by B.Sc (Hons) Physiotherapy and LLD.

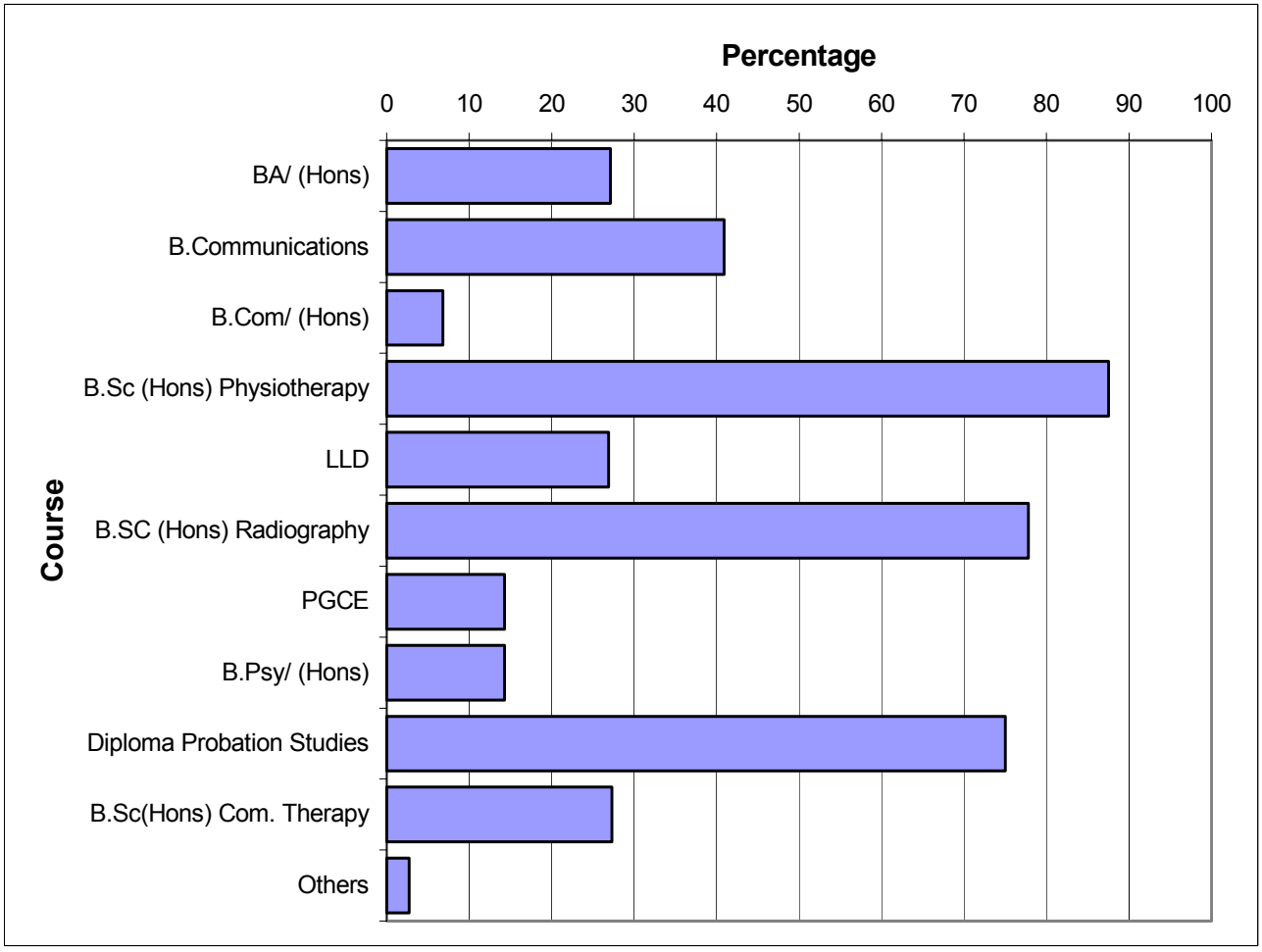
When examining the unemployment rate of graduates with specific qualifications one should take into consideration the number of graduates with that qualification. Respondents who graduated with B.Sc (Hons) Physiotherapy, B.Sc (Hons) Radiography and Diploma Probation Studies experience the greatest difficulty in finding employment (see Table and Figure below).

**Table 64. Job seekers* by course**

| | Count | % of all respondents with the same qualification | % of total job seekers not in full-time employment nor full-time study |
|---|---|---|---|
| BA (Hons) | 19 | 27.1 | 19.8 |
| B.Communications | 9 | 40.9 | 9.4 |
| B.Com/ (Hons) | 9 | 6.8 | 9.4 |
| B.Sc (Hons) Physiotherapy | 7 | 87.5 | 7.3 |
| LLD | 7 | 26.9 | 7.3 |
| B.Sc (Hons) Radiography | 6 | 77.8 | 6.3 |
| PGCE | 4 | 14.3 | 4.2 |
| B.Psy/ (Hons) | 4 | 14.3 | 4.1 |
| Diploma Probation Studies | 3 | 75 | 3.1 |
| B.Sc (Hons) Com. Therapy | 3 | 27.3 | 3.1 |
| Others** | 25 | 2.7 | 25.3 |

**Only job seekers neither in full-time employment nor full-time study are presented*
*** Includes respondents who did not specify which qualification they were conferred.*

**Figure 7. Graduate unemployment by course**



For 60% of respondents, the University course was a prerequisite to apply for the job they currently hold. This tendency is strongest among *Engineering*, *Science* and *Medicine & Surgery* graduates and though to a lesser extent, *IHC* graduates (100%, 96%, 95% and 72% respectively). These respondents tend to find work in the field they specialised in, and in professions which tend to be regulated by law. On the other hand, the *CLS* and *CCT* graduates tend to be in jobs not requiring their University qualification (79% and 78% respectively).

**Table 65. University course requirement for job by faculty/ institute**

| | Yes | | No | | Total (Count) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | |
| Arts | 29 | 55.8 | 23 | 44.2 | 52 |
| FEMA | 134 | 54.5 | 112 | 45.5 | 246 |
| Education | 186 | 62.2 | 113 | 37.8 | 299 |
| Engineering | 25 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 25 |
| Laws | 24 | 64.9 | 13 | 35.1 | 37 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 35 | 94.6 | 2 | 5.4 | 37 |
| Science | 24 | 96.0 | 1 | 4.0 | 25 |
| IT | 9 | 56.3 | 7 | 43.8 | 16 |
| CCT | 8 | 21.6 | 29 | 78.4 | 37 |
| IHC | 60 | 72.3 | 23 | 27.7 | 83 |
| CLS | 7 | 21.2 | 26 | 78.8 | 33 |
| Others | 33 | 49.3 | 34 | 50.7 | 67 |
| **Total** | **574** | **60.0** | **383** | **40.0** | **957** |

*Education* graduates top the figures (79%) for those employed within the public sector. The government is the main provider of education in Malta, and is the largest employer of the teachers.

Most *IHC* (74%), *CLS* (73%), and *Medicine & Surgery* (65%) graduates also work in the public sector. Taking into consideration the mean age of *CLS* graduates, their employment within the public sector might be attributed to lack of private employment alternatives when they were seeking employment (at a younger age) or to their adherence to the popular belief that employment within the public sector is more secure. The existence of a contract with the government forces a large proportion of *IHC* and *Medicine & Surgery* graduates to spend the first years of post-graduate work in the public sector.

On the other hand, the large majority of *Engineering*, *IT, CCT* and *FEMA* graduates work in the private sector (88%, 88%, 73%, and 72% respectively). This can be attributed to better employment opportunities for such specialisations in the private sector.

An interesting balance between public and private employment can be found in *Arts* graduates. Such result can be analysed in relation to their low full-time employment rate and high rate of job seekers. It seems that the job market for such graduates is restricted in both public and private sector.

**Table 66. Sector of employment by faculty/ institute**

| | Public | | Private* | | Total (Count) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | |
| Arts | 24 | 46.2 | 28 | 53.8 | 52 |
| FEMA | 70 | 28.3 | 177 | 71.7 | 247 |
| Education | 234 | 79.1 | 62 | 20.9 | 296 |
| Engineering | 3 | 12 | 22 | 88 | 25 |
| Laws | 13 | 35.1 | 24 | 64.9 | 37 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 24 | 64.9 | 13 | 35.1 | 37 |
| Science | 9 | 36 | 16 | 64 | 25 |
| IT | 2 | 12.5 | 14 | 87.5 | 16 |
| CCT | 10 | 27 | 27 | 73 | 37 |
| IHC | 62 | 73.8 | 22 | 26.2 | 84 |
| CLS | 24 | 72.7 | 9 | 27.3 | 33 |
| Others** | 45 | 67.2 | 22 | 32.8 | 67 |
| **Total** | **520** | **54.4** | **436** | **45.6** | **956** |

**Includes self-employment*
***Includes respondents who did not specify which faculty/institute they got heir qualification from.*

*Engineering*, *Medicine & Surgery*, *IT* and *Science* graduates are the groups who tend to work most at the professional/ technical level (100%, 88%, and 84% respectively). Interestingly about 60% of *Education* graduates are working in categories of work classified lower than those of professional/technical and administrative/managerial. Such high percentage is largely attributable to the proportion of respondents who graduated as special educational needs facilitators and who have been classified in the executive/ clerical category.

A large proportion of *Laws, CLS, CCT and FEMA* graduates work in administrative/ managerial posts (28%, 24%, 24% and 22% respectively). It is worth noting that several graduates in *Education and Arts* occupying executive/ clerical posts might be over-qualified for their jobs. There is a large percentage of graduates from *CLS, CCT* and *FEMA* in executive/clerical posts. This was expected in the case of *FEMA* graduates due to the nature of their work. For many of these, an executive/ clerical post is the obligatory transitional stepping-stone leading to a career in administration and management. *CCT* graduates are less likely to be following such trend, and for a considerable proportion of them, their executive/ clerical job might be the beginning of long-term underemployment. On the other hand, *CLS* graduates were most probably in executive/clerical posts before they followed their University course. They might find less professional jobs due to the fact that *CLS* only offers diploma courses, not degrees.

**Table 67. Occupation by faculty/ institute (%)**

| | Employer/ own account worker | Professional/ technical | Administrative/ managerial | Executive/ clerical | Skilled/ semiskilled | Unskilled | Total (Count) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | 1.9 | 45.3 | 13.2 | 32.1 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 53 |
| FEMA | 0.8 | 42.3 | 22.2 | 33.5 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 248 |
| Education | 1.0 | 39.0 | 2.0 | 56.0 | 0.3 | 1.7 | 300 |
| Engineering | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 25 |
| Laws | 0.0 | 64.1 | 28.2 | 5.1 | 0.0 | 2.6 | 39 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 0.0 | 81.1 | 18.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 37 |
| Science | 4.0 | 84.0 | 12.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 25 |
| IT | 6.3 | 87.5 | 0.0 | 6.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 16 |
| CCT | 5.3 | 26.3 | 23.7 | 34.2 | 0.0 | 10.5 | 38 |
| IHC | 3.5 | 82.4 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 2.4 | 5.9 | 85 |
| CLS | 0.0 | 15.2 | 24.2 | 57.6 | 0.0 | 3.0 | 33 |
| Others | 0.0 | 47.8 | 19.4 | 28.4 | 1.5 | 3.0 | 67 |
| **Total** | **1.3** | **49.5** | **12.5** | **33.6** | 0.4 | **2.6** | **966** |

More than one fourth of the respondents (28%) who work on a full-time basis earn a gross salary of more than Lm500 per month. *Medicine & Surgery* and *Engineering* graduates are the highest earners; 78% and 72% respectively of these graduates earn more than Lm500 per month. These figures can be compared to those of graduates from *Education, Arts* and *IHC*, who tend to be the lowest earners (59%, 44%, and 40%, of the respective groups earn less than Lm401 per month).

**Table 68. Current gross income of full-time workers by faculty/ institute**

| | Less than Lm401 | | Lm401 to Lm500 | | More than Lm500 | | Total (Count) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | |
| Arts | 15 | 44.1 | 13 | 38.2 | 6 | 17.6 | 34 |
| FEMA | 76 | 34.5 | 77 | 35.0 | 67 | 30.5 | 220 |
| Education | 165 | 59.4 | 89 | 32.0 | 24 | 8.6 | 278 |
| Engineering | 1 | 4.0 | 6 | 24.0 | 18 | 72.0 | 25 |
| Laws | 10 | 28.6 | 10 | 28.6 | 15 | 42.9 | 35 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 1 | 2.7 | 7 | 18.9 | 29 | 78.4 | 37 |
| Science | 1 | 4.3 | 8 | 34.8 | 14 | 60.9 | 23 |
| IT | 2 | 16.7 | 2 | 16.7 | 8 | 66.7 | 12 |
| CCT | 5 | 19.2 | 12 | 46.2 | 9 | 34.6 | 26 |
| IHC | 26 | 40.0 | 24 | 36.9 | 15 | 23.1 | 65 |
| CLS | 13 | 39.4 | 9 | 27.3 | 11 | 33.3 | 33 |
| Others* | 17 | 29.3 | 19 | 32.8 | 22 | 37.9 | 58 |
| **Total** | **332** | **39.2** | **276** | **32.6** | **238** | **28.1** | **846** |

**Includes respondents who did not specify which faculty/institute they got heir qualification from.*

Further analysis of gross monthly income by course for new graduates can be viewed in the Table and Figure below. Only full-time bachelor courses with 8 or more respondents working full-time are listed. MD, B.Eng (Hons), B.Sc (Hons) IT, and B.Pharm (Hons), graduates tend to earn the highest salaries. Most B.Accty (Hons), B.Ed (Hons), and B.Sc (Hons) nursing graduates tend to earn between Lm 401-Lm500. On the other hand, the lowest earners are B.Sc (Hons) Radiography, B.Sc (Bus & Comp), B.Sc (Hons) Com. Therapy, BA (Hons) Soc Work, and B. Com graduates.

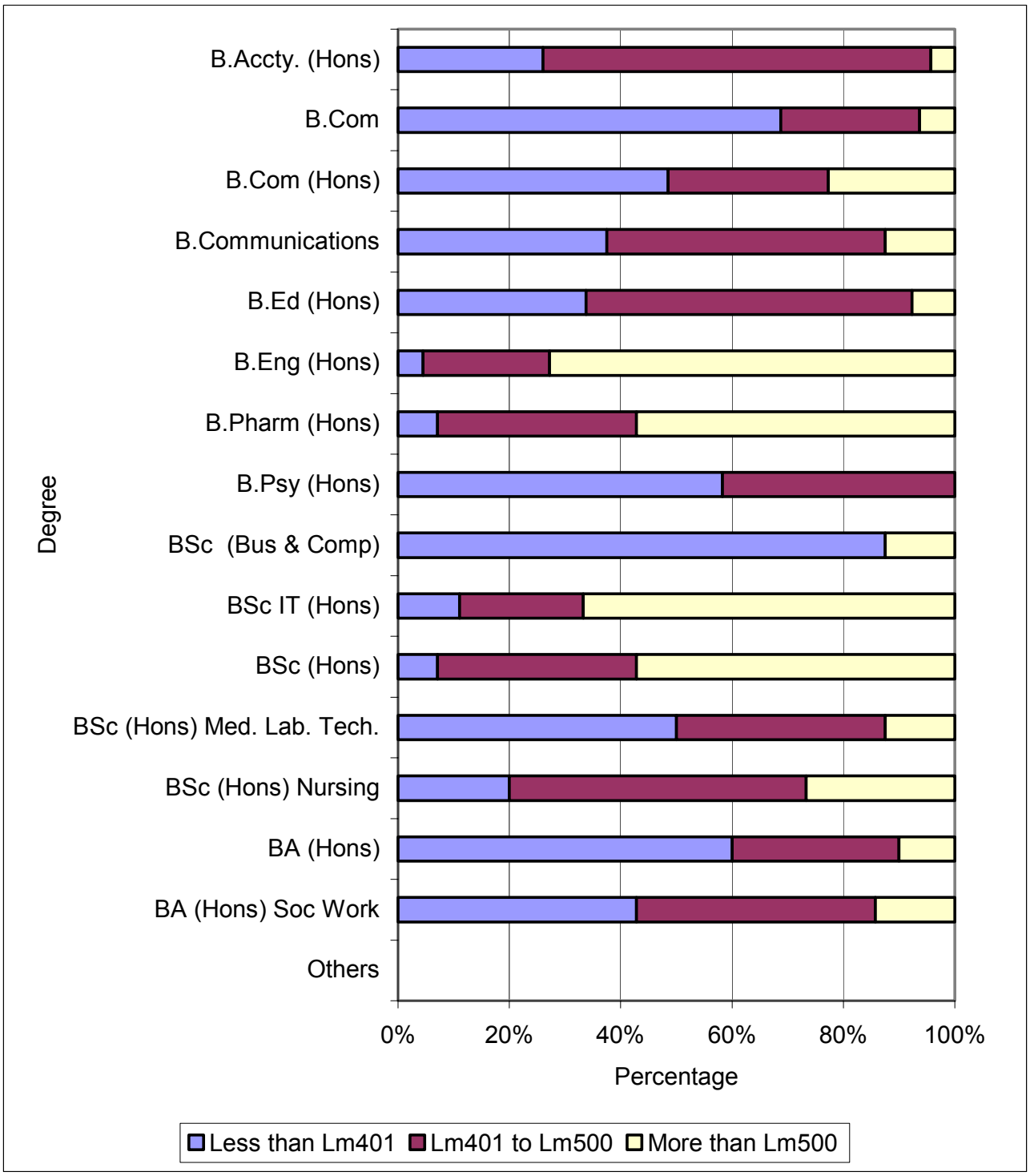
MD, B. Eng (Hons), B.Sc (Hons) (IT), and B. Pharm (Hons) graduates tend to earn the highest salaries. Most B.Accty (Hons), B.Ed (Hons), B.Sc (Hons) Nursing, and BA (Hons) Soc Work graduates tend to earn between Lm 401-Lm500. On the other hand, the lowest earners are B.Sc (Hons) Bus and Comp, B.Com, BA (Hons), B.Psy (Hons) and B.Sc (Hons) Med. Lab. Sci. graduates.

A difference in income is noticeable in graduates from faculties and institutes that offer science-based courses and those that offer art-based courses. Graduates in caring professions and the arts tend to find jobs with lower salaries than those in sciences, especially those involving medicine, engineering, computers, and pharmacy. Graduates with B.Sc Business and Computing are surprisingly among the lowest earners. The computing part of their degree did not give them initial salaries comparable to those with B.Sc (Hons) IT. One should note that this data mostly reflects the initial salaries one gets after graduating. Progression of salaries varies among different jobs.

**Table 69. Current gross monthly income of full-time workers by degree**

| | Less than Lm401 | | Lm401 to Lm500 | | More than Lm500 | | Total (Count) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % | |
| BA (Hons) | 12 | 60.0 | 6 | 30.0 | 2 | 10.0 | 20 |
| BA (Hons) Soc Work | 6 | 42.9 | 6 | 42.9 | 2 | 14.3 | 14 |
| B.Accty. (Hons) | 12 | 26.1 | 32 | 69.6 | 2 | 4.3 | 46 |
| B.Com | 11 | 68.8 | 4 | 25.0 | 1 | 6.3 | 16 |
| B.Com (Hons) | 32 | 48.5 | 19 | 28.8 | 15 | 22.7 | 66 |
| B.Communications | 3 | 37.5 | 4 | 50.0 | 1 | 12.5 | 8 |
| B.Ed (Hons) | 22 | 33.8 | 38 | 58.5 | 5 | 7.7 | 65 |
| B.Eng (Hons) | 1 | 4.5 | 5 | 22.7 | 16 | 72.7 | 22 |
| B.Pharm (Hons) | 1 | 7.1 | 5 | 35.7 | 8 | 57.1 | 14 |
| B.Psy (Hons) | 7 | 58.3 | 5 | 41.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 12 |
| B.Sc (Bus & Comp) | 7 | 87.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 12.5 | 8 |
| B.Sc (Hons) IT | 1 | 11.1 | 2 | 22.2 | 6 | 66.7 | 9 |
| B.Sc (Hons) | 1 | 7.1 | 5 | 35.7 | 8 | 57.1 | 14 |
| B.Sc (Hons) Med. Lab. Sci. | 4 | 50.0 | 3 | 37.5 | 1 | 12.5 | 8 |
| B.Sc (Hons) Nursing | 3 | 20.0 | 8 | 53.3 | 4 | 26.7 | 15 |
| MD | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 10.5 | 17 | 89.5 | 19 |

**Figure 8. Current gross monthly income of full-time workers by degree**



Adverts on newspapers (including the Government Gazette) are the most popular method through which graduates got to know about their current job. They are mostly used by *CCT*, *Laws*, *FEMA*, *CLS*, *Arts*, *IT* graduates. However, the majority of *Medicine & Surgery* (50%), *IHC* (49%), and *Education* (40%) graduates found work through government's Health and Education departments respectively. A greater ratio of *Engineering* and *IT* graduates were approached by employers (38% and 31% respectively) when compared to their peers. Some of these graduates have probably been approached by foreign employers. Employment agencies are mostly used by *Arts* graduates (17%).

**Table 70**. **Type of job search by faculty/ institute (%)**

| | **Advert newspaper** | **Relatives/ friends** | **Employment agency** | **Info at University** | **Education/ health department** | **Internal call/ promotion** | **Approached by employer** | **Sent CV\ Own Initiative** | **Other** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Arts* | 32.7 | 15.4 | 17.3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 15.4 | 5.8 | 5.8 |
| *FEMA* | 40.7 | 16.4 | 5.8 | 11.1 | 2.2 | 6.6 | 9.7 | 4.0 | 3.5 |
| *Education* | 21.8 | 17.5 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 40 | 3.2 | 8.2 | 6.1 | 1.4 |
| *Engineering* | 25.0 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 20.8 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 37.5 | 0.0 | 8.3 |
| *Laws* | 41.9 | 16.1 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.5 | 9.7 | 0.0 | 22.6 |
| *Medicine & Surgery* | 17.6 | 8.8 | 0.0 | 2.9 | 50 | 0.0 | 14.7 | 0.0 | 5.9 |
| *Science* | 27.3 | 27.3 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 9.1 | 0.0 | 13.6 |
| *IT* | 31.3 | 18.8 | 12.5 | 6.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 31.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| *CCT* | 48.6 | 16.2 | 10.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 8.1 | 0.0 | 13.5 |
| *IHC* | 9.6 | 13.3 | 1.2 | 7.2 | 49.4 | 3.6 | 8.4 | 2.4 | 4.8 |
| *CLS* | 35.5 | 22.6 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 6.5 |
| Others* | 21.3 | 9.8 | 4.9 | 0.0 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 31.1 | 3.3 | 6.6 |
| **Total** | **28.5** | **15.8** | **4.3** | **5.0** | **21.0** | **4.8** | **11.9** | **3.7** | **4.9** |

**Includes respondents who did not specify which faculty/ institute they got their qualification from*

### 3.5.3 Job-Related Attitudes by Faculty/ Institute

Significant differences among various faculties emerged as regards the attitudes with the exception of one relating to whether they feel skilled enough for their job, in which scores among the faculties do not show any differences.

*Education* graduates seem to have among the most favourable work-related attitudes. They tend to feel more satisfied and less stressed with their job. They also tend to perceive their job as more challenging when compared to their peers, can more easily balance work and private life, and few them intend to quit their job.

*Laws* graduates also have positive work-related attitudes. Many of them can develop their career with their present employer. They perceive their job as more challenging than others and tend to be more satisfied with their relationships with their colleagues. At the same time, *Laws* graduates find it easier to balance work and private life and consider less quitting their job.

A considerable proportion of *Engineering* graduates tend to be satisfied with their work relationships and with the respect shown by their superiors. However, they tend to feel more unduly stressed by their job and consider quitting more often than others. These attitudes are influenced by the relatively good work opportunities existing in the field.

*Science* graduates tend to feel relatively satisfied with their job. They are less stressed, have better opportunities to develop their career with their present employer, and are relatively satisfied with their salaries. At the same time, they perceive their job as challenging. *Science* graduates are content with their work relationships and with the respect shown by their superiors.

*Medicine and Surgery* graduates tend to be feel unduly stressed by their jobs and are the least satisfied with the respect shown by their superiors. However, there are relatively few who think about quitting their job. Unlike their *Engineering* or *IT* peers, *Medicine and Surgery* graduates do not usually have suitable alternatives to their present jobs.

*IT* graduates feel relatively less stressed by their job and perceive greater possibilities to develop their career with their present employer. At the same time, they tend to be satisfied with their salaries and with their work relationships. However, they still consider quitting their job relatively frequently. This could be due to the favourable labour market situation which offers interesting alterative jobs.

**Table 71. Job-related attitudes by faculty/ institute – part 1**

| | Skilled enough for my job* | | Satisfied with my job | | Unduly stressed in my job | | Can develop career with present employer | | Satisfied with salary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** |
| *Arts* | 4.13 | 1.020 | 3.58 | 1.200 | 2.78 | 1.101 | 3.32 | 1.438 | 2.83 | 1.216 |
| *FEMA* | 4.15 | .800 | 3.64 | 1.035 | 2.95 | .995 | 3.49 | 1.111 | 2.67 | 1.102 |
| *Education* | 4.32 | .615 | 4.21 | .869 | 2.79 | 1.035 | 3.18 | 1.211 | 2.34 | 1.028 |
| *Engineering* | 3.92 | .954 | 3.64 | 1.036 | 3.40 | 1.000 | 3.40 | 1.080 | 2.60 | .913 |
| *Laws* | 4.03 | .768 | 3.79 | 1.044 | 2.92 | 1.050 | 3.95 | 1.104 | 2.58 | 1.222 |
| *Medicine & Surgery* | 3.92 | .924 | 3.84 | 1.143 | 3.62 | 1.233 | 3.28 | 1.301 | 2.51 | 1.216 |
| *Science* | 4.24 | .723 | 4.04 | .935 | 2.80 | .913 | 3.64 | 1.287 | 3.04 | .978 |
| *IT* | 4.25 | .856 | 3.75 | 1.390 | 2.81 | .981 | 3.69 | 1.493 | 3.06 | 1.436 |
| *CCT* | 4.24 | .820 | 3.74 | 1.131 | 2.84 | 1.242 | 3.16 | 1.346 | 2.97 | 1.174 |
| *IHC* | 4.12 | .802 | 3.61 | 1.274 | 3.08 | 1.222 | 3.33 | 1.334 | 2.36 | 1.116 |
| *CLS* | 4.28 | .772 | 3.59 | 1.132 | 2.87 | .976 | 2.94 | 1.273 | 2.22 | 1.008 |
| *Other* | 4.21 | 1.000 | 3.84 | 1.125 | 3.34 | 1.039 | 3.14 | 1.379 | 2.55 | 1.145 |

**=no significant difference among graduates from different faculties and institutes*

*CCT* graduates tend to feel less unduly stressed in their job when compared to their peers, and tend to be among the most satisfied with their work relationships. However, they experience relatively more difficulties to balance work and private life.

Many *Arts* graduates are less satisfied with their jobs and often consider quitting. At the same time, they tend not to feel unduly stressed on their job. This is probably influenced by the fact that several *Arts* graduates might be underemployed.

*CLS* graduates tend to exhibit relatively unfavourable work-related attitudes. Most of them got their diploma on a part-time basis while being employed in a full-time job. Their University course might have given them higher job expectations. However, due to lack of alternatives, many of them might have kept the same job after graduation, thus increasing their work frustration. On a positive note, the older age of *CLS* graduates might play an important role in their higher ability to balance work and private life when compared to their peers.

Most *IHC* graduates are not satisfied with their salaries. Higher pay expectations might be attributed to the long hours worked which often include weekends. These graduates feel relatively less respected by their superiors, possibly indicating that their role in hospital settings might not be sufficiently appreciated.

**Table 72. Job-related attitudes by faculty/ institute – part 2**

| | Perceive job as challenging | | Satisfied with colleagues relationships | | Satisfied with respect superiors show | | Considering quitting job | | Easily balance work/private life | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** | **Mean** | **S.D.** |
| *Arts* | 3.62 | 1.274 | 4.08 | 1.089 | 3.72 | 1.045 | 2.42 | 1.216 | 3.34 | 0.979 |
| *FEMA* | 3.63 | 1.051 | 4.11 | 0.877 | 3.87 | 1.058 | 2.32 | 1.168 | 3.48 | 1.001 |
| *Education* | 4.11 | 0.878 | 4.26 | 0.823 | 3.92 | 1.000 | 1.72 | 1.025 | 3.74 | 0.946 |
| *Engineering* | 3.60 | 1.155 | 4.28 | 0.737 | 3.96 | 0.978 | 2.44 | 1.158 | 3.44 | 1.044 |
| *Laws* | 4.18 | 0.834 | 4.24 | 0.590 | 3.92 | 1.115 | 1.86 | 1.182 | 3.21 | 1.119 |
| *Medicine & Surgery* | 3.92 | 1.038 | 3.97 | 0.845 | 3.35 | 1.358 | 1.81 | 0.967 | 2.89 | 1.075 |
| *Science* | 4.04 | 0.978 | 4.24 | 0.779 | 4.16 | 0.850 | 2.04 | 1.274 | 3.32 | 0.690 |
| *IT* | 3.75 | 1.125 | 4.44 | 0.629 | 3.88 | 1.204 | 2.44 | 1.315 | 3.44 | 1.094 |
| *CCT* | 3.76 | 1.149 | 4.21 | 0.843 | 3.78 | 1.058 | 2.39 | 1.405 | 3.18 | 1.291 |
| *IHC* | 3.64 | 1.219 | 4.15 | 0.843 | 3.38 | 1.279 | 2.08 | 1.204 | 3.30 | 1.106 |
| *CLS* | 3.13 | 1.212 | 3.69 | 1.030 | 3.47 | 1.164 | 2.41 | 1.160 | 3.56 | 1.045 |
| *Other* | 3.72 | 1.098 | 4.00 | 0.835 | 3.42 | 1.117 | 2.31 | 1.246 | 3.55 | 1.004 |

## 3.5.4 Employment History by Faculty/ Institute

The percentage of graduates employed before graduating varies according to faculty/ institute. The highest level of employed students is found in *CLS, Education, Laws* and *FEMA* (94%, 76%, 68% and 66% respectively). The overwhelming majority of *CLS* graduates enrolled at University after a number of years in employment. In fact there was only one *CLS* respondent under the age of 25. As age might be regarded as a confounding variable affecting the relationship between faculty/ institute and employment before graduating, figures for students in the youngest age-bracket (20-25 years old) have been derived. While this procedure reduced the overall percentages of employed individuals, *Education, Laws* and *FEMA* still maintained the highest percentages of respondents employed before graduating. Given that the engagement of new teachers occurs mainly during the period stretching between late August and early September, many *Education* graduates have to wait for a comparatively shorter time after the termination of their course and are employed in bulk prior the opening of

schools and before their graduation usually held in October. Besides, many *Education* respondents graduated (as special educational needs facilitators) with a diploma which necessitated previous employment as part of its entry requirements. High employment rates among students enrolled in *Laws* and *FEMA* follow the trend of the previous study and may be due to the personality of graduates which is more enterprising than that of their peers. This is in line with findings from Caruana (2005) showing that students following Doctor of Laws and Bachelor of Accountancy (Honours) at the University of Malta tend to be more enterprising than others.

On the other hand, the faculties/ institutes with the fewest employed students tend to be the science-oriented ones, namely *IT, Medicine & Surgery, Science* and *Engineering*. These results might stem from the intensity of science courses which might leave less free time for a part-time job.

**Table 73. Employed before graduating by faculty/ institute (%)**

| | All age groups | | 20-25 years old | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |
| *Arts* | 46.3 | 53.7 | 43.9 | 56.1 |
| *FEMA* | 66.1 | 33.9 | 53.6 | 46.4 |
| *Education* | 76.0 | 24.0 | 57.7 | 42.3 |
| *Engineering* | 44.0 | 56.0 | 27.8 | 72.2 |
| *Laws* | 68.4 | 31.6 | 54.5 | 45.5 |
| *Medicine & Surgery* | 35.1 | 64.9 | 31.3 | 68.8 |
| *Science* | 41.7 | 58.3 | 33.3 | 66.7 |
| *IT* | 31.3 | 68.8 | 8.3 | 91.7 |
| *CCT* | 59.5 | 40.5 | 41.7 | 58.3 |
| *IHC* | 51.2 | 48.8 | 37.9 | 62.1 |
| *CLS* | 93.9 | 6.1 | 100* | 0.0 |
| Others* | 76.5 | 23.5 | 60.0 | 40.0 |
| **Total** | **65.3** | **34.7** | **48.6** | **51.4** |

** Only one respondent was 20-25 years old*

### 3.5.5 Discussion of Main Findings by Faculty/ Institute

The University of Malta is not equally accessible for children coming from different family backgrounds. The most prestigious courses which lead to the traditional professions, namely law, and medicine and surgery, tend to attract students with higher educated parents. Indeed, there seems to be a high level of self-recruitment. This may be deterring working class students from taking these courses, being afraid that without the social networking they might find it difficult to embark on a successful career. Courses offered by other faculties and institutes such as *Education* and *CLS* tend to be more accessible for children with less qualified parents.

Salaries seem to be related to the course followed at University. There are market variations between salaries earned by students from different faculties and institutes. This may be due to the demands of the knowledge-based economy with its emphasis on IT and technology. According to the Graduate Potential Group (2002), Maltese employers will be mostly requiring IT/computing, engineering, marketing and management graduates in the coming years. The shortage of qualified and internationally certified system engineers, internet experts and network specialists indicates that future graduates holding qualifications in these areas will experience fewer risks of remaining unemployed.

However, not all science graduates are similarly lucky. *IHC* graduates in courses specialising in physiotherapy, radiography and communication therapy find it particularly difficult to land a job. The situation stems from the fact the government, the main employer of such graduates, is trying to limit its intake of new employees in order to curb the public deficit. Graduates with B.Communications, BA (Hons), and LLD qualifications are also experiencing difficulties in landing a job.

Many graduates are in jobs not requiring their University qualification. Considering that most University courses are job-oriented and that they often lead to professional or semi-professional qualifications, one hopes that for many, this is only a transitory period that will be over when graduates get more work experience. The changes in the utility of University qualifications within the first year after graduating can be examined by comparing 2004 graduates with their 2002 peers. The Table below shows that there was a considerable increase in the percentage of *Science* graduates in jobs requiring their University qualification. The same trend can be observed to a lesser extent in *Arts* and *Laws* graduates. On the other hand, fewer *Education*, *IHC* and *FEMA* graduates were in courses requiring their University qualification.

**Table 74. University course requirement for job by faculty/institute 2002-2004 (%)**

| | Graduates 2004 | Graduates 2002 | Difference 2004-2002 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | 55.8 | 39.7 | 16.1 |
| FEMA | 54.5 | 61.3 | -6.8 |
| Education | 62.2 | 82.4 | -20.2 |
| Engineering | 100 | 100 | 0 |
| Laws | 64.9 | 52.4 | 12.5 |
| Medicine & Surgery | 94.6 | 84.6 | 10 |
| Science | 96.0 | 65.6 | 30.4 |
| IT | 56.3 | n.a. | n.a. |
| CCT | 21.6 | 14.3 | 7.3 |
| IHC | 72.3 | 91.1 | -18.8 |
| CLS | 21.2 | n.a. | n.a. |
| Others | 49.3 | 45.0 | 4.3 |
| **Total** | **60.0** | **67.1** | **-7.1** |

*n.a. = not available*

# 4. SYNTHESIS OF DISCUSSION

The results of this study have to be contextualised within the present Maltese occupational structure that changed considerably during the last two decades. The liberalisation of the market and the restructuring exercises needed to control the fiscal deficit have reduced employment in the public sector. The shift from manufacturing to services enabled the private sector to absorb many of the workers which the public sector used to recruit. Tourism, finance and ICT were among the sectors that expanded. Concurrently with this change in the occupational structure, the last two decades witnessed a phenomenal expansion of post-secondary and tertiary education, and a surge in interest in lifelong learning. The University of Malta has continued increasing its student population despite the fact that MCAST, which was launched only four years ago, managed to attract about 4,000 students in the academic year 2005-2006.

This expansion in education, to a certain point, was aligned to the demands made by the service industry for clerical and professional jobs. However, this study reveals that in a number of fields such as communications, physiotherapy, radiography and law, supply has exceeded demand. Other areas where this has still not occurred may not be far from saturation point. A better liaison between education and the employment sector might have prevented this over supply which is resulting in increasing underemployment and unemployment of graduates.

Efforts to align post-secondary and tertiary education with the needs of the work sector have traditionally tended to be sporadic and inconsistent. A lack of proper policy and strategy is probably the main reason for such failure. The career guidance system in Malta, while in operation for many decades, has until now not been given sufficient resources to operate effectively. Besides, the various private and public entities working in the career guidance field are not adequately coordinated.

Education is one of the key priorities on the agenda of the current government. It is hoped that the drafting of a career guidance policy for compulsory schooling, which should be completed by mid-2006, will pave the way for a more concerted effort in the field.

The ideal matching of supply and demand is always difficult to achieve. The Maltese economy with its almost total dependence on foreign direct investment makes this ideal matching much more difficult. This calls for more professional and comprehensive research to get a clear picture of the present educational and employment situation, and to understand trends and potential future scenarios. The National Statistics Office is providing valuable data on the state of the Maltese economy and the labour market. However, it is not yet producing adequate ongoing educational research. This tracer study seeks to fill a research lacuna by exploring

the early career-outcomes of University graduates. The following are some of the most significant results deriving from this study:

- Most graduates in the first year after graduation are in full-time employment in professional/ technical posts and earn the equivalent of the average National Maltese wage.

- About 40% of new graduates declare that they are in jobs not requiring their University qualification nine months after finishing their studies. However, one should note that while the qualification might not be mentioned in the job description, the training and experiences that go along with it might still be fruitfully used on the job.

- Adverts on newspapers are the most common type of job search used by graduates. Employment agencies are only used by 4% of new graduates.

- About 35% of all graduates further their studies, and most of these enrol in a Master programme. The ratio of graduates pursuing further studies immediately after getting their University qualification decreased by 10% in two years.

- Around 8% of graduates who were conferred with their academic awards in November 2004 were neither in full-time studies nor in full-time employment and were searching for a job in March 2005. The graduate unemployment rate increased by 4% over the past four years. The majority of the unemployed graduates were females (64%), 20-22 year olds (46%), and were conferred with a BA (Hons) degree (20%).

- University graduates tend to experience positive attitudes towards their working life. For instance most of them are satisfied with their jobs and with their work relationships.

- Males and females are not equally represented in all University courses. While a higher percentage of females graduated from *Education, Arts* and *IHC*, a higher percentage of males graduated from *Engineering*, *IT*, *Science*, and *FEMA*.

- Male graduates experience more favourable work-related outcomes than their female peers according to traditional standards. They tend to earn higher wages, occupy higher-level jobs and have better career prospects with their present employer. Gender differences in wages tend to persist when comparing males and females within the same occupational level (such as professional/ technical).

- Female graduates tend to experience healthier work-related attitudes than their male peers. They more satisfied with their job and with their relationships at work. They also experience less undue stress and can more easily balance their work and private life. Gender differences in these work-related attitudes tend to persist when examining respondents within the same occupational level.

- Younger graduates are much more prone to work in the private sector when compared to older graduates. This trend has become more apparent in the last two years.

- Dissatisfaction with one's wage tends to increase with age reaching its peak among the 40+ age bracket.

- Parents' educational level and occupational status are not significantly related to the graduates' University grades.

- Higher classification is related to more favourable career outcomes including higher incomes.

- Parents' educational level is related to choice of University course. The Faculty of Medicine and Surgery tends to be the least accessible to students having parents with a low educational background. On the other hand, the phenomenon of dynasticism that used to be strong in the Faculty of Laws seems to be decreasing.

- Parents' occupational level is not significantly related to type of University course followed. Besides, in the early stages of their careers, many graduates do not take up occupations at a similar level to that of their parents.

- In general, graduates from science-based courses run fewer risks of unemployment or underemployment, and tend to earn more than their peers in arts-based courses. For example, 57% of full-time B.Sc (Hons) graduates earn more than Lm500 per month when compared to 10% of their BA (Hons) peers.

- A much higher percentage of *Laws* and *Arts* graduates tend to pursue further studies after getting their first University qualification.

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# REVIEWS (*alphabetical order*)

***Dr. Romina Bartolo***
***EU Information Officer***
***Union Haddiema Maghqudin***

The UHM has time and again emphasised the need for the social partners to be in liaison with the University, Education Department and Educational Institutions, to co-operate closely in order to provide proper guidance to students prior to choosing their field of study.

Improving the education of particularly the younger generation is of paramount importance. As the economy shifts from labour intensive to a value added economy, a knowledge-based society is a must.

Malta can only attract companies with a high value added which can compete in a cutthroat world. It is also important to guide the younger generation to fulfil its aspirations and ensure that Malta's economic and social cohesion are also addressed.

The research shows clearly that young graduates find difficulties in getting employed and that very often they accept the first job that comes their way. Although the research shows that most young graduates are satisfied with their job, it is perhaps important to ask why 40% of new graduates are in jobs not requiring their University qualification. However, although a University degree may not be directly linked to such a job, very often the background provided by the area of study does have its weight.

The segregation regarding gender has always been obvious in career choices. Despite much discussion about the importance of having male nurses and female engineers, the reality in our country is that it is very difficult to find a balance between work and family life. Girls tend to opt for those courses which lead to the possibility of being employed on family friendly conditions, and teachers' short working hours are very enticing for mothers of young children.

The gender pay gap is also obvious for graduates. Our country is not different from other EU countries and the gender pay gap is a reality, which needs to be addressed in a serious manner.

The fact that more boys choose science based courses, which ultimately give them more employment opportunities and better wages, should encourage those involved in career guidance to entice more girls to take up these studies. However, it is not enough to address these issues at secondary school level. Perhaps it is too late by

then. We need career guidance from a very early stage, even primary school level. The formation of the younger generation needs to be attended to during the course of years, which is by far more important than concentrating on the final 2 or 3 years of secondary school.

The UHM hopes that this research will act as a spur to more effort to link the education sector and the employment sector for the benefit of a labour market, which attracts foreign direct investment leading to employment, job satisfaction and a healthier economy.

***Ms. Doreen Coleiro***
***Education Division***
***General Workers' Union***

GWU is in full praise of the initiative carried out by the Student Advisory Services and the Centre for Labour Studies of the University of Malta. Such studies are highly beneficial to all stake-holders and all those who are interested in following the trends and choice of careers pursued by the Maltese.

Such study is also highly important in any attempt at serious work within the vocational field.

Professional services happens to be one of the Sections which GWU represents within its multi-sectoral set-up. Indeed, as the conclusions drawn show, Malta's job market is small and saturation points of workers in specific fields are quickly reached. It is highly intriguing that most graduates in full-employment in professional/technical posts earn more or less the same as the average National Maltese wage. This is no incentive at all to encourage students to sacrifice the better years of their lives and take up studies in order to be of service to their state in later years. The state should adopt the approach that such students are standard bearers of service towards their country because it is easier at times to leave school and study at an early age and start earning a wage.

Undoubtedly it is also very worrying when one learns that around 8% of the graduates conferred with their degree in November 2004 were still unemployed for at least four months. However, it is also important to note that once they find a job around 40% were in jobs not requiring their university qualifications up to nine months after finishing their university studies.

GWU feels that although in a democratic country students should be left all possible options open to suit their desires in their choice of careers, it is imperative that such students will be offered a clear picture along the way of how the market is performing. It could be the case whereby students following a particular course with the aim of taking up a particular occupation, half way through the course, the economic climate related to that field undergoes serious setbacks. Thus, students should be in a position to assess their choice of career even during their course. More so, students should be given all means of assistance in order to determine their possible employability after the study years are over.

GWU highly opposes the fact that university faculties and courses are still not equally accessible to students coming from parents with different educational backgrounds. Whether there is a socio, cultural or anthropological explanation, GWU feels that this entails another study on its own.

The study reinforces the fact that there is still a lot that needs to be done when it comes to Gender Equality. This is being said in the light that the Tracer Study has found out that male graduates are still experiencing more favourable work-related outcomes than their female peers according to traditional standards. GWU is not in favour of the fact that males tend to earn higher wages and occupy higher-level jobs and have better career prospects with their present employer. Thus although GWU praises all efforts being done on a national level in order to foster Gender Equality, it calls upon the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women (NCPE) to take up the challenge that this study has come up with.

GWU also feels that a national campaign based on further surveys should be launched in order to make students aware that science-based courses provide better employability.

Once again the GWU reinforces its commitment and full support to scientifically – based studies of this kind in order to provide clear pictures of the situation when it comes to choice of career.

***Human Resources & Social Policy Working Group***
***Malta Federation of Industry***

The Malta Federation of Industry (FOI) expresses satisfaction on the tracer study issued by the Centre for Labour Studies and the Students Advisory Services of the University of Malta in cooperation with Euroguidance Malta regarding the career outcomes of graduates. It is a very positive and well researched document that certainly provides very useful data in the field of career guidance, higher education and employment services. As the document rightly states, the study seeks to fill a research lacuna by bringing to light the early career outcomes of University graduates.

Indeed, while the Federation feels that this study is very well presented, a number of lacking features may have prevented the document from being more valid and valued from an employers' viewpoint.

## 1. The Gender Aspect

The Federation considers that this study suggests significant gender orientation in a number of professions, emanating not only from the conditions of work but also from 'halo' contextual attributes. Such orientation reflects the perception of these professions, as exemplified by education, engineering and pharmacy. In this context, however, the Federation also notes a gap in the study in relation to reasons why students of specific gender are not attracted towards such careers, thereby jeopardizing the employers' efforts to build a truly gender balanced workforce in specific sectors.

## 2. Parents' Occupation

Very noteworthy is the fact that, as reflected in Table 6 of the study, both University and the educational system itself are contributing in a positive manner towards Maltese society. Indeed, the table clearly suggests that the majority of University students are emerging from medium earning and also single earner families, who, in the absence of financial assistance provided to students in the form of stipends, may potentially be unable to support their young offspring in pursuing University studies.

## 3. The Economic Sector

There are various University faculties, amongst which one can mention the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, and the Faculty of education, in which there is a strong link with the economic sector – with significantly lower levels of graduate unemployment (within the first year following graduation). This suggests that such faculties are indeed very much versed with the country's economic needs in such sectors, with graduates typically finding themselves in employment without much additional training.

Regrettably, this is not the case in other faculties, with common knowledge prevailing about the gap between the competences accruing among University graduates and the requirements of various private employers in a significant number of industries. Such gap often calls for employers' intervention through the provision of orientation training prior to delegating new University graduates in work – a case that can be drawn from careers pursued by graduates in Pharmacy, Law, Engineering, Science, and Commerce. This is a contrasting note when other educational institutions are considered in this context, as exemplified by the resources output by MCAST – an institution that for the past years has strived to close such gap to an optimized minimum and responded timely to the ever-changing needs of the economy.

## 4. Links with the World of Work

Another point worth mentioning refers to the statistics set out in Table 9, showing an increasing trend wherein graduates are being engaged in jobs that essentially do not require their qualifications. Such observation raises concern that calls for further research and action. In addition, it places an additional context on the following statement:

'The University is frequently accused of having insufficient links and dialogue with the world of work, and consequently, of running courses which are not necessarily in-step with Malta's contemporary labour market needs.'

Is it not part of the University's business to keep abreast of the country's economic needs to facilitate the integration of its graduates?

## 5. Career Guidance

The study under review identifies the necessity of correct career guidance. Definitely the FOI agrees, and has in fact been insisting for a long time, that there should be a national policy to this end. Besides, it proposes that University together with employer bodies and other institutions could contribute towards career guidance by providing adequate training material to Malta's educational institutions. This contribution could also include the analyses of particular topics in order to upgrade or update the quality of career guidance resources and the services offered. Both aspects of this contribution towards guidance must take into account the country's economic needs and trends.

## Conclusion

This document expresses a strong commitment to improve in so far as career guidance, higher education and employment services in Malta are concerned. The FOI believes that this is a step in the right direction and a very important step indeed as the document features a very important and relevant study. However, the FOI is strongly of the opinion that it would be even more relevant if the points discussed in this study were to be taken on board. Could such points be the basis of another University study? Could the next study be even more valuable and relevant if it also reflected the effects of other higher tertiary institutions on the statistical data given?

***Dr Janet Mifsud***
***Commissioner, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women***

Universities have crucial roles to play in generating social transformation, economic and political change. The University of Malta is now over 400 years old and has over the years produced highly qualified professionals, who have played key roles in Maltese industry, commerce and public affairs.

The Centre for Labour Studies and the Student Advisory Services of the University of Malta, in cooperation with Euroguidance Malta are to be congratulated for this university graduates tracer study, as it provides the major stakeholders in the field of career guidance, higher education and employment services, with useful data in the area. This study is a timely update, following previous studies by the same group, and is especially relevant, especially considering the context of the rapid changing socio-economic and geopolitical situation, the great cultural changes and the challenge of globalisation in the Maltese Islands. Innovations in science and technology have transformed patterns of production and work practices, and new knowledge-based work skills are being demanded. More families are moving towards the dual breadwinner model, which in turn has intensified pressures on individuals who have to constantly cross the boundaries between paid work, education and private life.

Gender should be identified as a core concern with regard to every single issue, especially access to education and the labour market. Achieving real measurable achievements towards gender equality in this area depends on reliable and validated data. This study is also particularly relevant as it provides an insight into the perceptions and expectations of the participation of males and female graduates in the labour market, which are essential components of the Lisbon Agenda, National Action Reform Plans and European Employment Strategy. EU Directives on the equal treatment of women and men in relation to access to employment, training, vocational or career advancement and working conditions, have adopted a dual approach to gender equality - a balanced combination of specific measures for the under-represented sex and "gender mainstreaming" measures, i.e. the incorporation of the gender dimension in all Community policies.

This study does address to an extent, the gender differences in the graduate labour market, and a whole section is dedicated to analysis of this data, the on going evaluation of which will assist in formulating recommendations for more effective action. It is interesting to note the varying trends. The respondents noted that while 70% of mothers of most graduates were not in paid employment, most graduates were female that year. Also of note is the fact that while the fine line between feminisation or masculinisation of the professions is disappearing, the traditional caring role of female is reflected in their predominance in the helping/caring

professions. It is also worrying to see that 4 % of the female graduates were reported to be underemployed in unskilled jobs, and that male graduates believe that they have better job prospects and high salary expectations than their female counterparts. The tables listing occupation by gender and monthly incomes should be further analysed with respect to degree and class obtained, before one can in fact state that there is a gender difference in income. It is also a pity that not all the data in the tables provided is gender desegregated.

Achieving greater gender equality in the broader social context within and through education will not happen easily. National policies and reforms will fail in the absence of strategies to address gender-related inequalities of access, participation and learning and recognition of the gender-differentiated social and economic outcomes in society as a whole. Further prospective studies should address issues on how these graduates eventually reconcile family and working life. This data would be essential in tackling gender gaps and desegregation on the long-term labour market. Future studies should also analyse the burden of unpaid labour and family responsibilities between male and females graduates, especially with the increasing trend of older graduates.

Future studies should also address the major challenges associated with demographic changes of an ageing population, decreasing birth rates and a shrinking working population. A U.N. Population Fund report has stated that an integral part of reducing poverty, depends on devoting greater economic resources to women and girls and gender discrimination hampers economic development. Universities have a fundamental role in catalysing this change and the University of Malta should not lack behind in addressing these challenges. Tertiary education and research is itself a powerful force for bringing about the wider social and economic changes on which a nation's social and economic development depends.

*Mr Saviour Rizzo*
*A/Director Centre for Labour Studies*
*University of Malta*

The acquisition of qualifications is very often associated with the achievement of a high status job which demands administrative/managerial skills and/or the utilisation of expert and scientific knowledge. The analysis of this tracer study, directed at graduates in their first year after graduation, gives us a glimpse of how new graduates fare in their first year of transition from university to the world of work. The research is not hampered neither by size nor by under representation of groups. The data emanating from this survey attempts to evaluate the relationship between university education and the labour market.

The University may not be bound to respond to the exact needs of the economy, but it cannot afford to ignore them. There is no educational or University system which can - apart from should - claim that it has succeeded in producing the manpower with the requisite qualifications and in the exact quantities as demanded by the economic sector. The ideal of such an equilibrium tends to be very elusive since the pool of capabilities developed by the University seldom matches the needs of economy, as mediated by the labour force. Moreover education, and especially university education, suffers from the problem of 'escalation' in the sense that when or if educational plans seem to be meeting the level of actual needs a deeper level is discovered leading to further, higher needs.

What further compounds the issue about the dialectic between university education and the labour market is the fact that the gestation period for the educational investment is not short term. Thus forecasting in education has to be made in very broad terms; even more so in small labour markets liable to 'boom and bust' events This difficulty in forecasting has generated the idea among many academics of concentrating on broad general education rather than following a specific type of learning. The argument is that this type of education will provide a workforce with that kind of flexibility often equated with the needs of a post modern society. This study has however shown that a lack of specificity in University courses is far from being a blessing. It appears, from the data of this study, that the more specific the course followed by the university students the higher the chances of finding a job in the labour market.

The odds of students following science-based or management-based courses being unemployed or underemployed seem to be very low. The increasing technical nature of industry and the greater complexity of issues which managers and administrators are being called to deal with at the workplace have raised the level of education required for managerial jobs of all types whether scientific, financial or administrative. The graduates pursuing a course related to these areas do not

seem to be facing difficulties to integrate in the labour market because of the rise in demand in the labour market of persons possessing these skills.

In contrast the demand for graduates following law- and art-based courses seem to be lower than the supply. Students following courses that are academically (rather than vocationally) oriented tend to run higher risks of being unemployed or under employed. We have, of course, to bear in mind that this premise is being based on data related to students fresh from university. The situation can change dramatically as labour market demands change. Being more mobile, by virtue of their qualifications, they generally go on a long job hunt hoping to find the job which they feel is commensurate to the level of education they have attained. Besides even if they are under-employed in a clerical or executive job, which very often means a feeling of being under paid, they would still have the added value to their job by being graduates. This may help them to fare better in medium to long term. Nevertheless the mismatch between supply and demand, together with its inherent risk, is forcing many of these students to pursue post-graduate courses to enhance their credentials and improve their prospects in the labour market.

The inference that can be made is that University education is assuming much of the characteristics of the vocational. A degree gained through a university course may be viewed by industry as tantamount to a vocational qualification. This does necessarily mean that university education is being tailored to suit employers' needs. University may have been instrumental in raising the educational threshold of many occupations in the labour market. Jobs related to management, education and nursing may serve as good examples. The educational system in a post industrial society with a knowledge based economy may cease to be determined by the state of the economy. It may indeed become a cause rather than an effect, a determinant of the changes in the labour market and the rate of economic development. It is of course a moot point whether university education in Malta has reached that situation.

***Professor Edward L. Zammit,***
***Chairman, Centre for Labour Studies and***
***Deputy Chairman, Employment and Training Corporation***

The economic and social development of a country is closely linked to the educational attainment of its people. The contribution to Malta's economy and society made by the University of Malta over the years is self-evident. The University furnishes the country with the required professional services. These include both the traditional ones such as doctors, lawyers and architects, and others whose services are now also established among the professions. Included among the latter are teachers, managers, engineers, economists, accountants, social workers and so on. Some of these graduates become prominent as leaders in politics, business and voluntary associations. In addition, the University is a main contributor to the establishment of middle class values and aspirations which are central to national identity and culture.

The democratisation process and the economic developments which have been experienced in Malta during the last few decades are reflected in the structure of the University. New faculties and degree courses have been established which, as expected, are playing a leading role in current, national developments.

Yet, as the present study of University graduates' early careers points out, "Efforts to align post-secondary and tertiary education with the needs of the work sector have traditionally tended to be sporadic and inconsistent."

One immediately thinks, of course, of the much maligned *student-worker scheme* of two decades ago, when the perceived needs of industry and the public sector dictated the type of courses, the number of students, and ultimately affected the whole University structure. Among the factors contributing to the scheme's failure was the inability of both the government and the private sector to clearly anticipate the areas of future economic growth and to plan and act accordingly. In fact, the scheme's figures were often based on conjecture. Past experience in various countries has actually shown that the effectiveness of a centralised plan of higher education is as elusive as that of a centrally planned economy.

This has led the present government of Malta to abandon the student-worker scheme altogether and to adopt a liberal policy in higher education, enabling as many as possible to pursue a University education. The assumption was that the labour market would eventually regulate itself. In order to accommodate the increased number of students, the University embarked on a rapid expansion programme and the number of graduates increased significantly, year after year. For the first few years, the labour market absorbed all the new graduates who filled the many vacancies which had been left unfilled by the policy of the previous government. New occupational opportunities for graduates were also created as the

economy expanded. Now, however, that the rate of economic growth has significantly slowed down, the situation has dramatically changed and the number of unemployed graduates appears to be on the increase.

The present study, by bringing to light the early career placements of University graduates, makes a valid, much needed contribution towards the adoption of an effective policy on higher education in Malta.

The success of such a policy, however, depends on the availability of a vocational and careers guidance service both at University and many years before the students enter there. It is well known that vocational guidance has been provided in the Maltese educational system since the mid-Sixties, when it was established on the UK model. Nevertheless, the service had to operate with very limited resources and in relative isolation from both the central decision making structures of education *at various levels*, and even more from the world of work. It became more of a counselling service than of vocational guidance.

Following the factual information provided by the present survey, what is urgently required is the establishment of a professional careers guidance service working in close collaboration with the ETC, industry, education and the social partners as part of an integrated, national human resources development strategy.