Students graduating from Texas Tech University with graduate degrees benefited from expert and supportive faculty and felt they gained the relevant and necessary experience to succeed in their chosen careers. They are innovators and researchers; entrepreneurs; healthcare providers; educators and university faculty; leaders in business, government and nonprofit sectors; and promoters of the arts and humanities. Their contributions to the workforce enhance society and significantly enrich the local, national and global economies. Below is a synopsis of the survey results:

- Most graduates (75.7 percent) with Texas Tech University graduate degrees entered the workforce directly without continuing their education.
- Of those students graduating with Texas Tech University graduate degrees who continued their education, most went on to earn doctoral (44.8 percent) or master's/professional (42.7 percent) degrees.
- Thirty-two percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in higher education, while 68 percent were employed in other sectors, including Pre K-12 education (12.6 percent), business (27.1 percent), government service (7.8 percent), healthcare (5.4 percent), military (0.8 percent), nonprofit (3.6 percent), self-employed (6.6 percent), and other (4.1 percent).
- Most graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees (67.1 percent) were employed full-time; 19.1 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were not seeking employment or were retired.
- A majority of graduates (66 percent) with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in Texas.
- A vast majority of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees (83.8 percent) felt their graduate degrees were very closely or closely related to their current or most recent job.
- Nearly 85 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were very satisfied or satisfied with their overall program quality. 83.7 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the intellectual challenge of their program and 83 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of faculty.
- Graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees felt their graduate experience would have been enhanced by an improved climate/supportive environment (15.5 percent), better professional development (12.4 percent), greater degree/course offerings (13.7 percent), and better career guidance/placement (10.8 percent); 21.3 percent felt no improvement was needed.
INTRODUCTION

Graduate education plays a critical role in the workforce strategy of the U.S. and is essential for innovation in all fields of endeavor, from the arts and humanities to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Graduate degree holders bring increased value to the workforce and to society through their specialized knowledge and problem-solving ability.

The purpose of this survey was to determine the career paths of students following the completion of their graduate program at Texas Tech University and to learn if their graduate program (1) met students’ expectations, (2) helped students attain their career goals and objectives and (3) provided students with the skills to become successful in their careers. The survey was purposefully brief to encourage maximum participation from alumni, including some who graduated more than 30 years ago. This is the first Graduate Student Alumni Survey that Texas Tech University has conducted.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was administered by the Texas Tech University Office of Institutional Research to all alumni of record who earned a graduate degree at Texas Tech University, had an address on file, and graduated between 1940 and 2015 in five-year increments (e.g., 2015, 2010, 2005, etc.).

- 8,181 requests were mailed with 10 being returned due to an invalid address; 3,851 reminder requests were emailed with 462 requests returned due to email bounce back or an invalid email address.
- Paper requests were initially sent on March 9, 2016. Email reminders were sent on April 28, 2016 and June 9, 2016; responses were collected until June 21, 2016.
- A total of 1,132 responses were received, yielding a response rate of nearly 14 percent.


Question 1

Have you enrolled at a college or university since receiving your graduate degree from Texas Tech University?

(1,064 responses, 68 skipped question)

- A majority (75.7 percent) of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees did not continue their education.
- Of the graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees that continued their education, 12.8 percent continued full-time and 11.5 percent continued part-time.

Question 2

What is your current employment status?

(1,065 responses, 67 skipped question)

- A majority (67.1 percent) of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed full-time.
- 19.1 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were not seeking employment, including retired individuals.
Question 3

If you have enrolled at a college or university since receiving your graduate degree from Texas Tech University, what is the highest degree you have achieved or toward which you are currently working?
(248 responses, 884 skipped question)

- Almost 45 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees who continued their education after leaving Texas Tech University obtained or were pursuing a doctorate; 34.3 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees who continued their education after leaving Texas Tech University obtained or were pursuing a master’s degree; 8.4 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees who continued their education after leaving Texas Tech University obtained or were pursuing a first or second professional degree.

- 8.8 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees who continued their education after leaving Texas Tech University sought or were seeking additional credits rather than a degree, including 2.4 percent seeking a graduate certificate, 3.2 percent seeking some type of licensure, 3.2 percent seeking additional credit hours, and 3.7 percent seeking some other type of additional credits.

- Representative institutions at which graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees continued their education after leaving Texas Tech University are as follows:

  Arizona State University  Texas A&M University
  Baylor University        Texas Tech University School of Law
  Colorado State University University of Alabama
  Columbia University      University of Kansas
  Harvard University       University of Minnesota
  Illinois State University University of Oklahoma
  Louisiana State University University of Oregon
  Ohio State University    University of Texas
  Oklahoma State University University of Utah
Which category best describes the sector of your current or most recent employment?

(1,008 responses, 124 skipped question)

- In keeping with national trends 32 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in higher education, including 20 percent at research universities, 6.8 percent at four-year colleges and 5.2 percent at two-year college/technical schools.
- A majority (61.4 percent) of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in other sectors, including preK-12 education (12.6 percent), business (27.1 percent), government (7.8 percent), healthcare (5.4 percent), military (0.8 percent), nonprofit (3.6 percent), and other (4.1 percent).
- 6.6 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were self-employed.
- Individuals with Texas Tech University graduate degrees obtained employment at the following entities:

3M
Aramark
AT&T
Bayer Crop Science
Boeing
Cisco
Citigroup Companies
Exxon Mobil Corporation
Intel Corporation
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Merrill Lynch

Parkhill, Smith, and Cooper
PepsiCo
Phillips 66
Rolls-Royce Corp
Sandia National Laboratories
Schlumberger
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Tulane University School of Medicine
United Technologies Aerospace Systems
Xerox Corp
Question 5

What is the location of your current or most recent employer?
(906 responses, 226 skipped question)

- A majority (66 percent) of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in Texas.
- 4 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in Northeast U.S. states\(^1\).
- 11 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in West U.S. and Pacific states\(^2\).
- 12 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in other Southern U.S. states\(^3\).
- 5 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in other Midwest states\(^4\).
- 98 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees were employed in the U.S.

Question 6

My current or most recent job is closely related to my graduate degree?
(1,053 responses, 79 skipped question)

- A vast majority (83.8 percent) of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees strongly agreed (44.6 percent), agreed (22.6 percent), or somewhat agreed (16.6 percent) that their degrees were closely related to their current or most recent job.
- Only 11.5 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees somewhat disagreed (3.1 percent), disagreed (5.4 percent), or strongly disagreed (3.0 percent) that their degrees were closely related to their current or most recent job.

\(\text{\^1}\) Includes NY, PA, NJ, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, and ME
\(\text{\^2}\) Includes NM, AZ, CO, UT, NV, WY, MT, ID, OR, WA, CA, HI, and AK
\(\text{\^3}\) Includes OK, LA, AR, GA, FL, NC, SC, TN, KY, WV, MD, DE, DC, VA, AL, and MS
\(\text{\^4}\) Includes KS, MO, IL, IN, OH, MI, WI, IA, NE, SD, ND, and MN
Question 7

If your current/most recent position is/was not related to your graduate degree, what best describes your situation?

(88 responses, 1,044 skipped question)

![Bar chart showing reasons for not related position: FOUND MORE DESIRABLE POSITION 23.9%, NOT ABLE TO FIND RELATED POSITION 31.8%, DID NOT SERIOUSLY SEEK RELATED POSITION 21.6%, OTHER 22.7%]

- Of the 12 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees who felt their graduate degrees were minimally related or not related at all to their employment, 23.9 percent answered “found more desirable position in another field”, 31.8 percent answered “not able to find a position related to my graduate education” and 21.6 percent answered “I have not seriously sought a position related to my graduate degree” as the main reasons.

- “Other” reasons identified for why current/most recent position was not related to graduate degree include the following:

  “Career progression and further experience to build on education.”
  “Family emergency led to relocation to an area that does not offer job opportunity.”
  “Retired from career; work part-time intermittently.”
  “My peers and faculty challenged me as a student and they remain my closest friends today.”
  “The faculty. I had excellent professors in all my classes that were passionate about what they were teaching and kept up with the latest trends. Classes were always interesting and relevant.”
Question 8

How satisfied were you with the following academic elements of your graduate program? Percentages reflect those who responded very satisfied or satisfied.
(1,046 responses, 86 skipped question)

- Graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees felt the most positive aspect of their graduate experience was the overall quality of their program (84.7 percent). Intellectual challenge (83.7 percent) and quality of faculty (83 percent) were ranked just under quality.

- Specific positive experiences mentioned by graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees include the following:

  - “Texas Tech has an outstanding reputation for the quality of graduates entering the accounting field.”
  - “The faculty mentors and strong academics. I feel as though I was well prepared for internship and post-doctoral experiences.”
  - “Positive relationships with faculty.”
  - “Classes were small / Professors were challenging.”
  - “Professors who engage students and challenge them to become better.”
  - “Provided the next step in my professional growth, provided tools to help me successful and filled in gaps left from my undergraduate classes.”
  - “My peers and faculty challenged me as a student and they remain my closest friends today.”
  - “The faculty. I had excellent professors in all my classes that were passionate about what they were teaching and kept up with the latest trends. Classes were always interesting and relevant.”
Graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees felt their graduate experience would have been improved by greater climate/supportive environment (15.5 percent), enhanced professional development (12.4 percent), and greater program/class availability/accessibility (13.7 percent).

Graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees also felt their graduate experience would have been improved by greater career guidance (10.8), more effective communication/reduced bureaucracy (5 percent), enhanced stipends/financial assistance (4 percent), improved advising (8 percent), and improved university infrastructure (9 percent).

21.3 percent of graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees felt no improvement was needed.

Specific recommendations mentioned by graduates with Texas Tech University graduate degrees for enhancing the graduate experience include the following:

“Finding employment after graduation / Having intern program support to get real life experience in my field prior to graduation / Support for non-traditional students (families with children).”

“Teachers that are good at teaching, not research.”

“I wish I’d had more and better opportunities to publish with faculty.”

“Continuing to enhance communication throughout the program.”

“Suggest more practical industry focus and greater use of industry analysis tools.”

“More cross collaboration between universities on projects.”

“More clubs/organizations aimed at being professionals.”
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Contact Information

Phone: 806.742.2781
Email: gradschool@ttu.edu
Web: www.gradschool.ttu.edu