

Factsheet University College Maastricht (UCM)

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ROA Factsheet

ROA-F-2023/6E

Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA
Research Centre For Education and the Labour Market | ROA

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About the factsheet

The Dutch University Colleges aim to gain systematic insights into their alumni's experiences during and after their studies as well as into their current labour market status. For this purpose, The Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA) has carried out a graduate survey among the Dutch University Colleges' alumni.¹ The survey covers graduates from both University Colleges and Liberal Arts Programmes (UC/LAP).

This factsheet contains the results of the survey for alumni of the University College Maastricht (UCM). The survey was carried out in 2023 and was disseminated among all graduates of the 2004/2005 – 2021/2022 graduation cohorts. In total, 878 alumni responded, which represents a response rate of 34.2%.² In what follows, when we refer to the share of the graduates, we mean the share of graduates who answered the question. A similar survey has been carried out in 2017, covering the graduation cohorts of 2005 – 2017. The current survey addresses the same questions, but covers a broader population and can therefore not be readily compared to the previous wave. The response rate is skewed: the more recent graduation cohorts are more represented in the survey responses.

In this factsheet, we provide statistics for the UCM graduates on the following topics: (1) their experiences during their programme at the University College Maastricht; (2) their further studies, and (3) their current situation with regards to education and their labour market situation.

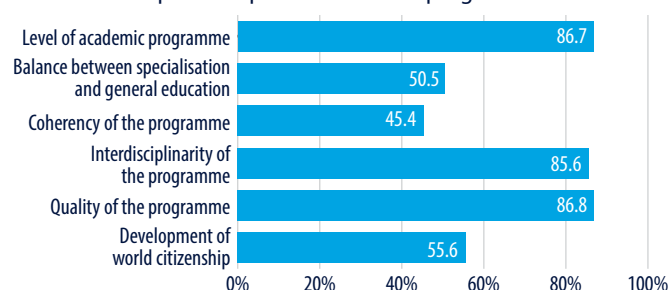
The programme

In general, UCM alumni are very satisfied with their study programme choice. The large majority of the graduates (88.3%) would choose to follow the same programme again at UCM. Only 2.6% of alumni would choose to do the same programme at a different institution. Some graduates would not choose to study at a University College at all in retrospect. More specifically, 3.1% would choose

to do a different programme at the same institution (i.e. Maastricht University), whereas 5.3% would prefer a different institution for an alternative programme. Less than 1% would not study at all, if they had to choose again.

FIGURE 1

Evaluation of specific aspects of the UCM programme



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (Academic level: N=615; Balance: N=616; Coherence: N=614; Interdisciplinarity: N=612; Quality: N=614; World citizenship: N=608). The items were measured on a four-point Likert scale and included the categories 'insufficient', 'weak', 'sufficient', and 'good'.

Figure 1 illustrates how graduates evaluate five specific aspects of their UCM programme. For each aspect, we report the percentage of alumni that evaluates the aspect as 'good'. The alumni especially value the quality, the academic level and interdisciplinary nature of the programme. For all these features, around 86% of the alumni scores them as 'good'. The aspects of world citizenship development and the balance between specialisation and general education are rated as 'good' by about half of the alumni (55.6% and 50.5%, respectively). The coherence of the programme is the least valued aspect of the UCM curriculum, with 45.4% of the graduates giving this aspect a 'good' score.

During their studies at UCM, many students acquired experiences through extra-curricular activities. Participating in education abroad was most commonly reported: about 69.5% of the graduates studied abroad during their UCM programme. Volunteering in a student organisation or other voluntary groups was also frequently mentioned (about 65%) and over half of the graduates (57.8%) acquired experience through work that was not related to their study programme. Doing an internship during the studies was less common, with only 28% of the alumni having engaged in one. About 17.9% of the alumni reported to have acquired work experience related to

1 University College Maastricht, Maastricht Science Programme, University College Venlo, Amsterdam University College, Leiden University College, University College Groningen, University College Twente (ATLAS), and University College Tilburg.

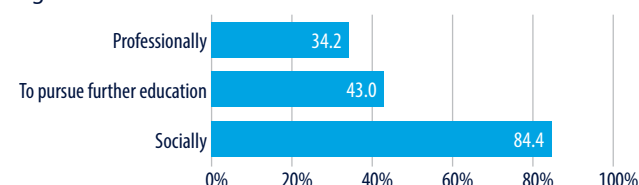
2 It is important to note that not all 878 respondents completed the survey. Out of the 878 respondents, 268 respondents ended the survey before reaching the final question.

their study programme during their studies. Writing the thesis outside university (5.5%) as well as starting an own business (3.6%) were the least common ways of gaining extra-curricular experience during the UCM programme.

Studying at UCM can provide the opportunity to build an (academic) network. The survey shows that this was the case for the majority (61.9%) of the graduates, as they indicated that they were able to establish a valuable network during their time at UCM. As shown in Figure 2, of those 'networkers', graduates benefited mostly socially from that network: more than four in five people (84.8%) indicated to have profited to a (very) high extent socially. The share of graduates that reported to have benefitted from the network for further education (43.0%) or professionally (34.2%) is lower.

FIGURE 2

Benefits from the social network established at UCM to a (very) high extent



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (Professionally: N=465; Further education: N=453; Socially: N=479)

Note: Three out of five alumni indicated that they established a valuable network during their study period at UCM. These alumni were asked how they benefitted from their network. Respondents could choose multiple answers. The items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all' to 'To a very high extent'.

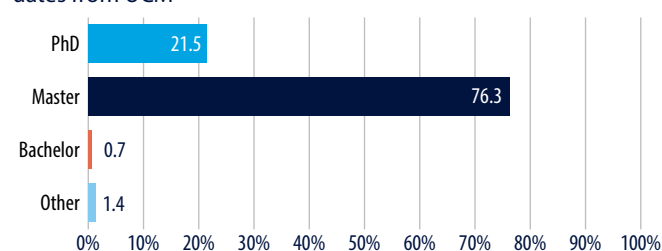
Alumni do not only build on and profit from a network because of their studies; they also provide the UCM with a valuable network. More than 90% of the alumni are willing to contribute in some way or the other to UCM. Examples of contributions include giving a guest lecture, informing prospective students on the UCM programme and life after graduation or organizing a workplace visit at their company.

Further study

UCM confers Bachelor's degrees, and the survey demonstrates that 92% of its alumni pursue further education. In Figure 3, we show the highest level of further education of UCM alumni. It illustrates that more than three out of four UCM graduates enrol in an education programme at Master level, whereas 21.5% enrolls in a PhD level education as highest level. Enrolling in a Bachelor's programme as highest type of education is not common at all (only 1.4%) as is the case for other types of education (0.7%). Interesting to mention is that among those who continued with a Master's degree, about 37.4% enrolled into a Master programme at a top 100 university.^{3,4,5,6}

FIGURE 3

Distribution of highest level of further educational tracks of graduates from UCM



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (N=692)

When we take a closer look at the international population of UCM, we observe that a considerable share remains in the Netherlands to pursue further education. The survey indicates that 40.3% of the UCM graduates do not have a Dutch nationality and 35.1% of them enrolls in a Master's programme in the Netherlands.

³ Based on the [World University Rankings 2024](#).

⁴ Looking into the top 50 and top 25 universities, these percentages respectively yield 15.9% and 6.7%.

⁵ In the factsheet that is based on the results from the graduate survey conducted in 2017, we reported the percentage of alumni who obtained a Master's degree from a top 100 university. Unfortunately, the last graduate survey only measures whether alumni enrolled into a Master's programme at a top 100 university.

⁶ Interestingly, Utrecht University does not appear in the 2024 [ranking](#) as they decided to not participate in the ranking any longer. Assuming that Utrecht University would be present in the top 100 university ranking, the percentage of alumni who enrolled into a Master's programme at a top university would increase to 42.8%.

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TABLE 1

Top 10 of fields of study of further education by graduates from UCM

1	Psychology	9.2
2	International relations	7.3
3	Political science	7.0
4	Law	6.0
5	Business economics	4.7
6	Neuroscience	4.2
7	Economics	3.8
8	Philosophy	3.7
9	Environmental science	3.4
10	Sociology	3.4

Source: Alumni Survey UCM (N=1029; multiple answers per respondent possible)

Based on Table 1, we can delve deeper into the further education UCM graduates pursue. The table shows the top 10 of all education programmes that the respondents of the alumni survey are currently enrolled in or graduated from after obtaining their degree from UCM.⁷ Since students were allowed to fill in a maximum of three follow-up study programmes, the percentages in Table 1 are based on more cases than the number of students participating in the alumni survey. Psychology is, with 9.2% of the given programmes, the most common field of further education for alumni, followed by International relations (7.3%) and Political science (7.0%). At the bottom of the top-10-list of chosen fields of study are Economics, Philosophy, Environmental science and Sociology. In total, at least 30 different fields of studies were reported for further education. UCM graduates thus continue their educational career in very diverse educational fields.

Since many graduates move on from UCM to pursue further education, the survey addresses the satisfaction of graduates concerning the help for preparing for the continuation of education. Of the UCM alumni, 36.6% was to a (very) high extent satisfied with the help provided by the University College in finding suitable further education. At the same time, more than nine out of ten alumni (91.3%) perceived the UCM programme to be to a (very) high extent helpful to succeed in further studies. This implies that the UCM programme prepared students more for the actual follow-up degree than for the process of finding a suitable programme.

⁷ Of all indicated enrolled programmes, the 'other' category was filled out by about 31.6%.

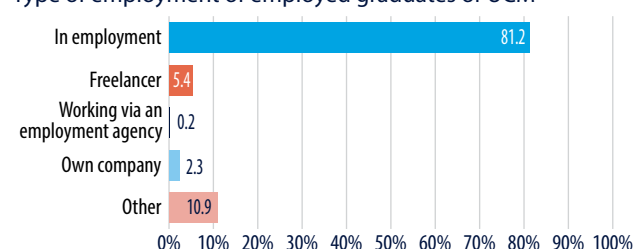
Zooming in on the process of applying for further education, more than four in five alumni (81.3%) of the graduates indicated that there were no additional requirements for their follow-up study.⁸ At the same time, 31% of the graduates have applied for a study programme without being accepted. Of those students who were rejected, one in five reported that there was no reason provided for the rejection. In the case that reasons were provided, missing courses (27.9 %) was most commonly mentioned. Of those alumni who were rejected for a follow-up study, the majority (80.5%) chose another educational programme, 3.2% decided to follow the required courses and 15.3% decided not to continue to study.

Current situation: continued education and employment situation

The survey provides an opportunity to gain a better insight into the current activities and pursuits of UCM graduates. The results show that 10.9% of the UCM alumni were still studying at the time of the survey. Of those alumni who joined the labour force, only 5.3% are unemployed, whereas 94.7 % are working.⁹

FIGURE 4

Type of employment of employed graduates of UCM



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (N=558)

Note: The figure only includes alumni who entered the labour market and are employed.

Figure 4 provides an overview of the employment status of the UCM graduates employed at the time of the survey. Four out of five of those graduates work for an employer (81.2%). The share of employed graduates who work as freelancers yields 5.4%, whereas 2.3% has their own

⁸ This indicator only measures the requirements needed for the first of a maximum of three follow-up studies in the survey.

⁹ Being part of the labour force means currently looking for a job or working for at least 1 hour per week, students excluded.

company. Less than 1% of the employed graduates is working for an employment agency. The remaining 10.9% of the employed graduates are classified as 'Other', which could for example mean a PhD contract or working during a gap year.

TABLE 2

Top 5 of fields of work for graduates who are currently employed

Research occupation (e.g., researcher, medical laboratory technician, medical analyst)	17.2 %
Advisory occupation (e.g., Human Resources employee, lawyer, legal service provider, staff member)	16.2 %
Management occupation (e.g. manager/director)	10.8 %
Commercial occupation (e.g., sales employee, commercial agent, public affairs consultant, marketing specialist)	9.5 %
Financial/business occupation (e.g., bank employee, financial specialist, business consultant)	9.5 %

Source: Alumni Survey UCM (N=557)

Using Table 2, we can take a closer look at what occupations the UCM graduates are most commonly employed in. The top 5 occupations listed in the table show that the relative majority of the alumni (about 17.2%) ends up in research-related occupations; followed by advisory occupations (16.2%). Management occupations (10.8%), Commercial occupations (9.5%), and Financial or Business occupations (9.5%) finish off the top 5.¹⁰

TABLE 3

Top 5 of countries graduates are working in

Netherlands	37.1 %
Germany	24.0 %
United Kingdom	7.4 %
Belgium	4.6 %
United States	3.5 %

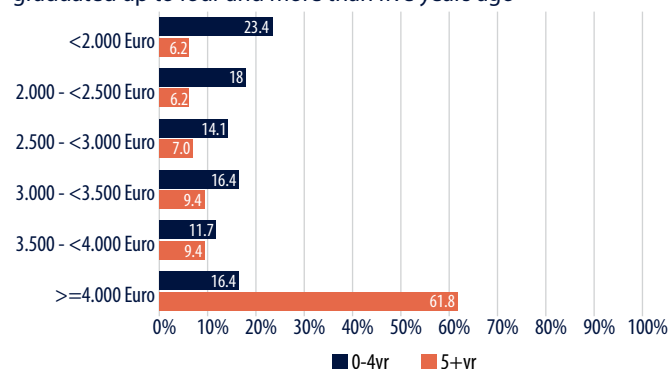
Source: Alumni Survey UCM (N=593)

Table 3 provides an overview of the top five countries in which graduates are currently working. With 37.1% of the alumni, the Netherlands is at the top of that list. Neighbouring countries are also high on the list with Germany on the second place (24.0%), the United Kingdom (7.4%) on the third and Belgium (4.6%) on the fourth. Lastly, 3.5% of the UCM graduates was working in the United States at the time of the survey. Of those alumni working in the Netherlands, about 22.4% are of non-Dutch

origin. This implies that after finishing their studies, there is not only a significant share of people who stay for further education, a considerable group also remains in the Netherlands for work.

FIGURE 5

Gross monthly incomes of UCM alumni, separately for those who graduated up to four and more than five years ago



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (N= 589)

The gross monthly income of UCM alumni is shown in Figure 5.¹¹ The income is measured in categories. For the sake of clarity, the categories above 4,000 euros a month are grouped together. The figure consists of two groups, namely those alumni who graduated from UCM within the last four years and those who graduated longer ago. As time since graduation is strongly related to gross monthly income, this is essential. The figure shows that alumni who graduated in the last four years frequently earn less than 2,000 euros per month.¹² However, 18% of those graduates earn between 2,000 and 2,500 euros gross per month. Another 14.1% earns between 2,500 euros and 3,000 euros a month. Of those alumni who graduated at least five years ago, the majority (61.8%) earns at least 4,000 euros gross per month. The observation that higher gross monthly incomes are related to more time since graduation is in line with the expectations.

¹¹ The income is only calculated for respondents belonging to the workforce. By doing this, we exclude students with side-jobs.

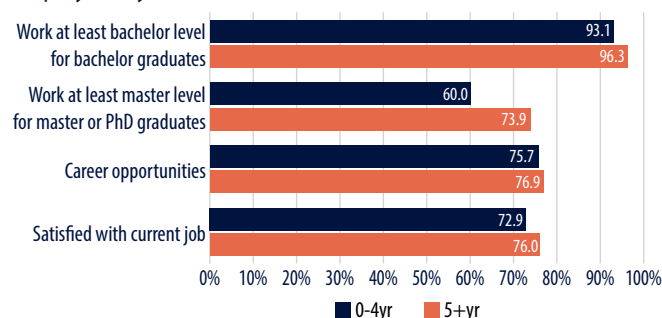
¹² Of those alumni who graduated up to four years ago, 62.5% of those who earn less than 2,000 euro per month work less than 30 hours per week. For those who graduated at least five years ago this share yields 33.3%.

¹⁰ Of the employed graduates, 15.5 % replied 'Other' to this question.

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FIGURE 6

Employability indicators of alumni of UCM



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (Master: N=494; Bachelor: N=503; Career opportunities: N=550; Satisfaction: N=551). The first two bars only contain respondents whose highest degree is a Bachelor's degree, the second two bars only contain respondents whose highest degree is a Master's or PhD degree.

Further zooming in on the labour market position of UCM graduates, we have to take into account that having a job does not necessarily imply that this job matches individual preferences and qualifications. For that purpose, we examine whether there is a so-called 'vertical mismatch'. This measure captures whether alumni work in a job that requires at least their highest obtained degree or a lower degree. Hence, we compare the minimum level that is required for their job and their own highest degree. A distinction is made between those who hold a Bachelor's degree and those with a Master's degree or higher.¹³

In Figure 6, we show these employability indicators for UCM graduates, comparing those who graduated between 0 – 4 years ago and those who graduated at least 5 years ago. For both groups with a Bachelor's degree, the large majority (93.1% and 96.3% respectively) works in a job that requires at least a Bachelor's degree. For those alumni with at least a Master's degree, the majority works in a job requiring at least a Master or PhD level. This share is larger for those who graduated at least five years ago (73.9% compared to 60% for the more recent graduates).

With regards to career opportunities and satisfaction with the current job, the two groups do not differ very much: 75.7% of the recent graduates report to have (very) many career opportunities (compared to 76.9% of the 5 year plus graduates). Furthermore, 72.9% of the recent graduates is

(very) satisfied with their job compared to 76% of those who graduated at least 5 years ago.

Conclusion

Using the University College survey, we offer insights into the experiences of UCM alumni with regards to the programme they followed, their further studies and their current career situation.

Concerning the experiences with the UCM programme, we showed that UCM graduates are overall satisfied with their choice for a UCM education and that many of them participate in extracurricular activities during their studies. Furthermore, the majority (61.9%) of alumni indicates that they were able to build a valuable (academic) network during their studies at UCM from which they benefited especially socially. More than 90% of the alumni declared to be willing to contribute in some way to UCM, therefore providing the university college with a valuable network.

We also delved deeper into UCM alumni's further studies and the survey results show that 92% of them pursued further education. Of those who continued education, 97.8% started a Master's or higher education in a wide variety of fields. We also show that about 35% of the college's alumni stay in the Netherlands to pursue a Master's degree. Furthermore, the results show that despite the fact that the majority of alumni reported that UCM prepared them to a (very) high extent to succeed in their further studies, only 36.6% reported to be satisfied to a (very) large extent with the help they received in finding suitable further education.

Concerning alumni's current career situation, the survey shows that 10.9% of students were still studying at the time of the survey. Of those who entered the labour market, only 5.3% are unemployed, whereas 94.7% are working. Working for an employer is the most common type of employment. The survey also shows that higher gross monthly incomes are related to more time since graduation and that the majority of graduates are (very) satisfied with their current job and career opportunities.

¹³ Again, we only include those alumni who are part of the working workforce.

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