

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2011

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ROA Fact Sheet

ROA-F-2011/4

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

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2011

How successful is Maastricht University in providing its students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the labour market? What career paths are Maastricht University Alumni taking in the short and medium term, and how do they look back on their time in Maastricht? This fact sheet presents the most important results of a survey among two cohorts of Maastricht University alumni. One cohort graduated in the academic year 2004-2005 (6.5 years prior to the survey), the other cohort graduated in the academic year 1999-2000¹ (11.5 years prior to the survey).

Position in the labour market

Table 1 gives a detailed overview of graduates' employment status by cohort and faculty. On average, 93% of alumni of the 2004-2005 cohort and 95% of alumni of the 1999-2000 cohort have paid work. Of those alumni active in the labour market, 4% (2004-2005 cohort) and 2% (1999-2000 cohort) are unemployed. Keeping in mind that a substantial part of this unemployment rate is frictional (i.e. the time period between two jobs), involuntary unemployment does not seem to be a problem amongst Maastricht University graduates, possibly with the exception of Psychology and Neuroscience graduates some five years after graduation.

Considering the above figures, labour market participation is very high for both cohorts of Maastricht University graduates. As a matter of fact, all disciplines taken together, only 2% of graduates of 2004-2005 and 3% of graduates of 1999-2000 report to be out of the labour force, with the only significant outlier being Medical graduates (8% of the 2004-2005 cohort inactive). When asked for the reason of their inactivity, a majority reports to be participating in further education or to be taking care of children or relatives.

Table 1
Paid work and unemployment

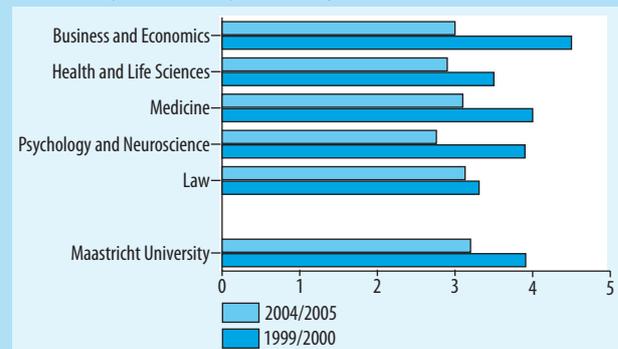
	% paid work		% unemployed	
	2004-2005	1999-2000	2004-2005	1999-2000
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
Business and Economics	94	95	5	3
Health and Life Sciences	94	96	3	2
Medicine	90	95	2	3
Arts and Social Sciences	93	x	4	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	90	96	10	0
Law	95	97	4	0
Maastricht University	93	95	4	2

x = too few cases

1. 35% of the 1816 graduates from the 2004-2005 cohort and 36% of the 1202 graduates from 1999-2000 took part in the survey.

Most of the alumni change jobs at least once during the first five years in the labour market. Only 11% of graduates of the 2004-2005 cohort and 3.8% of graduates of the 1999-2000 cohort are still employed in their first job. As can be seen in Figure 1, the 2004-2005 cohort of Maastricht University graduates have on average held three jobs until 2011. Graduates of the 1999-2000 cohort have on average held four jobs. Most job changes are associated with a change of employers. Although these figures stem from two different cohorts and can therefore not be compared in a strict sense, they indicate that most job mobility takes place in the first years of the transition into the labour market. This is especially true for professional careers associated with a law degree, while for example Business and Economics graduates still display a fair amount of job mobility in the second five years in the labour market.

Figure 1
Job Mobility (number of jobs since graduation)



Job characteristics

The match between graduates' education and the requirements of their job has important implications for the extent to which graduates can use their knowledge and skills. The quality of the education-job match is therefore positively related to job satisfaction, career opportunities and wages. Table 2a presents the proportion of Maastricht University graduates with a good horizontal education-job match, that is, the percentage of alumni who work in jobs for which their own or a related field of study is required. The results are positive, with 85% of alumni working in a good horizontal match. By nature of their very specific education, all Medical graduates are well matched. In contrast, 24% of the 2004-2005 graduates from Arts and Social Sciences currently have a job unrelated to their field of study. The quality of their horizontal match is therefore below Maastricht University average. However, while one third of these mismatched graduates say that they were not able to find a job related to their field of study, almost half report that a change in interest was the reason for working outside their field.

In addition to the horizontal match, the vertical match (i.e. whether graduates are working in a job for which a university degree is required) is an important indicator of the quality of the education-job match. Table 2b shows that 84% of the respondents who graduated in 2004-2005 and 87% of the respondents who graduated in 1999-2000 had an excellent vertical match between education and work at the time of the survey. There is, however, substantial variation between disciplines. All Medical graduates are perfectly matched. Psychology and Neuroscience, as well as Law graduates experience excellent vertical matching rates of above 90%. By contrast, one out of four graduates from 2004-2005 with a Health and Life Science degree currently works below his or her educational level. These outcomes are highly correlated with degree specificity as well as labour market conditions in the particular field. In all disciplines and for both cohorts, the percentage of graduates with an excellent vertical match increased remarkably between the first and the current job.

Table 2a
Horizontal match

	% working in own or related field of study	
	2004-2005	1999-2000
Humanities and Sciences	x	x
Business and Economics	82	89
Health and Life Sciences	83	94
Medicine	99	100
Arts and Social Sciences	76	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	86	71
Law	80	86
Maastricht University	85	85

x = too few cases

Table 2b
Vertical match

	% working at university level or higher first job		% working at university level or higher current job	
	2004-2005	1999-2000	2004-2005	1999-2000
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
Business and Economics	76	85	82	89
Health and Life Sciences	58	62	76	80
Medicine	100	100	100	100
Arts and Social Sciences	77	x	84	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	76	83	91	95
Law	83	82	90	93
Maastricht University	75	77	84	87

x = too few cases

At the time of the survey, the median gross income of Maastricht University alumni of 2004-2005 is €3500 per month, and this rises to €4500 for the cohort of 1999-2000

alumni (see Table 3). These numbers match the results of last year's survey and also income patterns across disciplines seem to remain stable: Health and Life Sciences alumni, Arts and Social Sciences alumni and Psychology and Neuroscience alumni have the lowest median income. Even after taking account of the considerably lower number of working hours per week of Health and Life Sciences and Psychology and Neuroscience alumni (especially for the 1999-2000 cohort) substantial differences in salaries remain. For Health and Life Sciences graduates these differences might partly be explained by the lower than average quality of the education-job match.

With a median gross income of €4300 per month Business and Economics alumni earn most among the 2004-2005 cohort. After five further years in the labour market, Medical alumni seem to take over the top position with a median gross income of €6000 per month. Due to the structure of their career paths, Medical alumni are also the group which displays the biggest income growth between five and ten years after graduation. Maastricht University graduates from the three top income disciplines (Medicine, Business and Economics and Law) report regular working hours per week between 38 and 40. It is worth mentioning that these figures present contractual working hours excluding overtime. Actual working hours can deviate from these figures.

Table 3
Income and working hours

	gross income per month [*]		regular working hours per week	
	2004-2005	1999-2000	2004-2005	1999-2000
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
Business and Economics	4300	5600	40.0	40.0
Health and Life Sciences	3150	3850	36.0	32.0
Medicine	3800	6000	38.0	38.0
Arts and Social Sciences	2900	x	40.0	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	3000	3500	38.0	32.0
Law	4000	5150	40.0	38.0
Maastricht University	3500	4500	40.0	36.0

x = too few cases

* Median of the gross income based on the contractual working hours in the main job.

Job satisfaction of Maastricht University graduates is generally high with 76% of alumni satisfied with their job among the 2004-2005 cohort and 80% of alumni satisfied with their job among the 1999-2000 cohort. The job satisfaction pattern across disciplines somewhat resembles income patterns, but they are certainly not congruent. For example, whereas Law graduates belong to the high income group, their level of job satisfaction is comparable to that of Psychology and Neuroscience graduates who earn considerably less. The level of job satisfaction of Health and

Life Sciences alumni of the 2004-2005 cohort is comparable to the Maastricht University average, yet it is the only group where job satisfaction does not increase when comparing it to the older cohort. Among the 1999-2000 cohort, Health and Life Sciences alumni report well below average job satisfaction. The most satisfied are Medical alumni, with a remarkable 91% (97%) of respondents reporting to be satisfied with their job.

Table 4
Job satisfaction, career opportunities

	% satisfied with job		job offers good career opportunities	
	2004-2005	1999-2000	2004-2005	1999-2000
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
Business and Economics	76	81	75	75
Health and Life Sciences	74	73	53	50
Medicine	91	97	80	63
Arts and Social Sciences	68	x	52	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	69	81	49	67
Law	70	82	71	52
Maastricht University	76	80	66	60

x = too few cases

The majority of Maastricht University alumni (66% of the 2004-2005 cohort and 60% of the 1999-2000 cohort) find that their current job offers good career opportunities. Opportunity differences across disciplines closely follow income differences across disciplines, especially when looking at the more recent graduates. Among the 2004-2005 cohort, Health and Life Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences as well as Psychology and Neuroscience graduates see least career opportunities, while Medical alumni see most. When comparing the more recent cohort to the older cohort, however, career opportunities of Medical and Law graduates register a substantial drop, while career opportunities of Business and Economics graduates seem to remain stable at a fairly high level and career opportunities of Psychology and Neuroscience alumni even increase.

Skill requirements

In order to get a picture of job requirements, Maastricht University alumni were given a list of skills and were asked to rate the extent to which these skills were required to do their current job appropriately. The skills most extensively required are analytical thinking (the ability to analyse and solve problems), the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to take responsibility and the ability to work productively in teams. These results match intuition about

the nature of graduate jobs. Analytical thinking and the ability to communicate effectively were reported to be required to a high or very high extent by 95% and 94% of alumni of both cohorts respectively, with low variation across disciplines. 95% of Medical graduates report the ability to take responsibility to be highly required to do their jobs, which is six percent above the total average. 89% of all alumni report team work to be of high importance in their job. Team work seems most important in jobs related to Psychology and Neuroscience degrees as well as Business and Economics degrees (93%) and least important – yet still highly important – in law professions (80%). Besides these more general skills, the importance of specific skills is not at all negligible: 75% of graduates report that their job required them to master their own field to a high or very high extent. In contrast, less than half of graduates state that knowledge of other fields is highly important, suggesting that being an expert of one's own field is still highly rewarded.

Alumni were also asked whether they had to deal with cultural, legal or ethical issues at work. A quite substantial percentage of Arts and Social Sciences graduates (69%), Medical graduates (60%) and Business and Economics graduates (56%) have to deal with cultural aspects to a high or very high extent at work. Moreover, a substantial number of graduate jobs are concerned with legal and ethical issues. This is particularly true of jobs related to medical and law degrees, yet to a considerable extent also of jobs related to the other disciplines. 81% of Medical as well as Law graduates versus 50%-60% of graduates from other disciplines report to have to deal with legal and ethical issues to a high or very high extent in their daily work life.

Table 5 reports the percentage of graduates who report that the respective skill is required to a high or very high extent in their job.

International work experience

The international orientation of Maastricht University and the fact that English is the main language of instruction in many study programmes, is attracting an increasing number of foreign students. Figure 2a shows the percentage of Maastricht University alumni of the 2004-2005 cohort who are currently working outside the Netherlands. For Maastricht University as a whole, 20% of the 2004-2005 alumni cohort are working in European countries other than the Netherlands, and 3 % are working outside of Europe. These numbers include foreign students who returned to their home country after graduation.

International orientation is not restricted to language use, it also means that the curriculum taught and the instruction method used prepare students for jobs on the

Table 5
% of graduates who report that their job requires skill to a high or very high extent

	Humanities and Sciences	Business and Economics	Health and life Sciences	Medicine	Arts and Social Sciences	Psychology and Neuroscience	Law	Maastricht University
Analytical thinking	x	94	95	95	86	98	97	95
Ability to communicate effectively	x	97	93	98	89	91	91	94
Ability to take responsibility	x	90	87	95	86	87	89	89
Ability to work productively in teams	x	93	88	89	89	93	80	89
Mastery of own field	x	76	76	94	72	80	80	79
Mastery of other fields	x	58	37	38	47	46	46	46
Ability to deal with cultural aspects of work	x	56	38	60	69	42	43	48
Ability to deal with legal and ethical aspects of work	x	53	60	80	61	47	81	62

international labour market. Asked to what extent the education received at Maastricht University prepared them for the international labour market, 48% of the 2004-2005 alumni cohort responded that they felt prepared to a high or very high extent. Figure 2b illustrates the relationship between feeling prepared to work abroad and actually working abroad. According to this figure, the School of Business and Economics is the most internationally oriented, with 77% of 2004-2005 graduates feeling prepared for the international labour market and 44% actually working outside the Netherlands. This is followed by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences where 50% of alumni feel prepared for the international labour market and 33% work abroad. Interestingly, a substantial proportion of graduates from study programmes that almost entirely cater to the Dutch labour market, such as Medicine and Health and Life Sciences, feel well prepared to work abroad, presumably because the content of their study is strongly internationally transferable.

Figure 2a
Percentage currently working abroad (cohort 2004-2005)

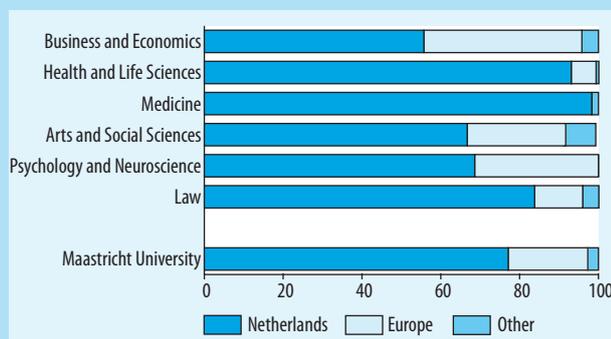
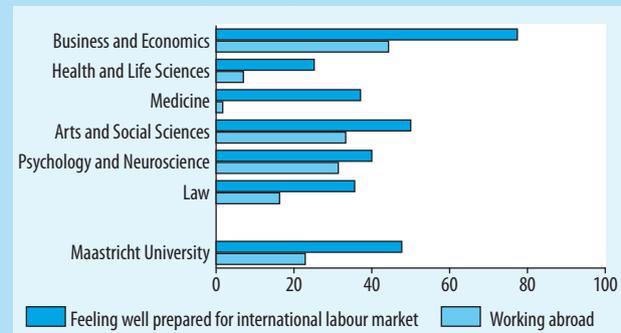


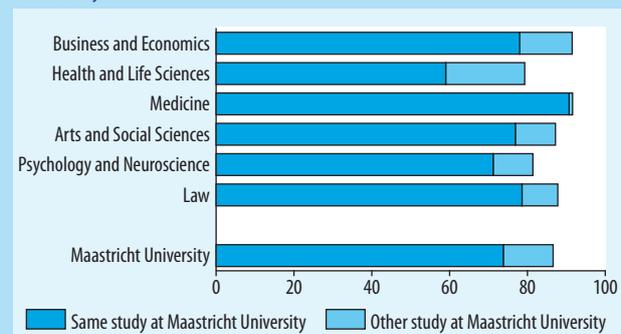
Figure 2b
Percentage of alumni feeling well prepared for international labour market and percentage working abroad (cohort 2004-2005)



Satisfaction with study at Maastricht University

Finally, alumni were asked to look back on their time at Maastricht University and assess which choices they would make in retrospect. 88% and 85% of the alumni in respectively the 2004-2005 and 1999-2000 cohorts would again choose for Maastricht University. 75% and 72% respectively would choose the same study program and 13% of both cohorts would choose for a different study program but again at Maastricht University. Figure 3 presents the survey results for both cohorts by discipline.

Figure 3
Percentage of alumni who would again choose to study at Maastricht University



In line with these findings, seven out of ten respondents think that their study at Maastricht University is still (very) useful for their current job. These results are very consistent across faculties and cohorts.

Even five and ten years after graduation, the bond between Maastricht University and its alumni is still strong. As part of the survey, alumni were asked whether Maastricht University could contact them to ask them to give a lecture or a presentation, to act as contact person in their company should internships become available there, or to act as a 'mentor' for current students. Almost 60% of the respondents indicated that they would like to become more involved in at least one of these Maastricht University alumni network and to thereby enable current students to learn and profit from the experiences of their older peers.

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